

# PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 17, 1919.

Price 6 Cents

## THE BRAND OF SIBERIA; OR, THE BOY TRACKER OF THE STEPPES.

By JULIAN PRYCE



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# The Brand of Siberia

OR

## THE BOY TRACKER OF THE STEPPES

By ALLAN ARNOLD

### CHAPTER I.

#### A TERRIBLE ACCUSATION.

The snow lay thick and white over the city, and a piercing wind kept the good people within doors.

The theaters and palaces of the royal city of St. Petersburg were gay with lights and garlands, bright with the ravishing toilets and splendid uniforms of titled ladies and men in high station, but the streets showed little life, and even the solitary police guards, as they patrolled the city, ere glad to seek shelter in archways or in the shadow of some stately building.

The soldiers in front of the royal palace paced monotonously up and down, thinking of the time they would be relieved and wishing that their duty had not called them out on such a blustering night.

There were fetes and balls and operas going on within doors, but without all was silent, cheerless and tempestuous, a fit comparison between the lives of the Czar and his nobles and those of his down-trodden subjects—the common people of Russia.

The time was some thirty years ago, during the reign of the Czar Alexander II., and then, even more than now, plots were constantly being made against the despotic rulers by those friends of freedom and enemies of tyranny, the Nihilists, whose meetings were obliged to be so secret on account of the great activity of the police and the presence of traitors in the secret body.

In a small house on an obscure street leading off from the river Neva upon this boisterous night there were gathered in a rear room, dimly lighted, some dozen or twenty men, all wearing a look of determination and all being above the average intelligence, the assembly being, in fact, a gathering of the leading spirits of Nihilism—the generals of the body, as it might, and not the mere rank and file.

"Our plans are all arranged, brothers?" asked a man of tall and commanding figure, evidently the leader of the party.

"Yes, and it needs but the striking of the hour to perfect them," answered another, equally striking in appearance.

"The men are told off?"

"Yes, and understand their duties."

"These are—to enter the palace, penetrate to the private study of the emperor and force him to sign certain decrees giving greater freedom to the people, abolishing banishment to Siberia without full investigations of the charges against political prisoners, the additional liberation of serfs and pardons for all persons who have served a certain number of years in the mines."

"True, and the men who are to obtain these rights—for I'll not call them concessions—are members of the imperial guard, and to-night will be on duty in the royal apart-

ments. With the members of our holy order in the very palace itself, and numbered among the emperor's most trusted servants, our affairs appear to be greatly prosperous."

"Yes," replied the chief, his brow darkening, "but are we free of spies and traitors?"

"They know the fate they will meet with, should they be discovered."

"Yes," returned the chief, with a grim smile, fixing his eyes firmly upon the face of the speaker, whose features showed no relaxing under that penetrating glance.

"When is the guard relieved?" presently asked the chief.

"At two o'clock."

"Good! There is no further business to be transacted?"

"None."

"Then we will adjourn. You, Laszinski, will meet me on the morrow at my house?"

"I will."

One by one the men withdrew, until at last only Laszinski and one other remained in the room, now more gloomy than before.

"Ivanoff," said the first, "all is done that can be done?"

"Yes."

"Our plot will succeed?"

"It must."

"Then my hour of triumph is near. My enemy out of the way, the girl in my power, the wealth of the Petroffs mine—ha, ha! What shall then prevent my taking the high station I have sought so long?"

"Nothing. To a man of your powers everything is possible. Does the chief suspect? You never once quailed before his fierce glance."

"Let him suspect all he will upon the morrow, so that our plans succeed to-night. What does Peter Laszinski care for him or his associates, compared to the objects to be obtained? Nothing. Come, the hour is late, and we have still much to do."

The two men then left the room separately, the lights being allowed to burn out at their pleasure after the last man had departed.

The Nihilists had conceived a bold plan by which they would obtain the enactment of measures which should greatly benefit them and the people, and they were prepared to sacrifice life itself in order to obtain the royal signature to the documents which should fully guarantee that the rights demanded should be given them.

Their chosen agents were enrolled in the emperor's bodyguard, as their spies were in the palace itself, and that this night should see the fulfillment of their most ardently cherished hopes they fondly believed.

But of what could Laszinski and Ivanoff be speaking, and why did the former affect to be so disdainful regarding the chief?

Did his plans, the consummation of which he so eagerly

looked for upon this very night, conflict with those of the Nihilists?

Who could answer these questions but the man himself?

On this same night in a comfortable but unpretending dwelling, not far from the great bridge over the Neva, were four persons, two of middle age and two some years younger, evidently the children of the elder couple.

Nikolas Petroff was a wealthy merchant of St. Petersburg, who, by his industry and thrift, had amassed a considerable fortune, and was reckoned as one of the most law-abiding citizens of the great city, taking an active part in its affairs and having the interests of the people always at heart, as was evinced by his advocacy of measures in their behalf, having frequently headed petitions with his name, and giving largely of his wealth for benevolent and charitable purposes.

Some said that he was a Nihilist, but there was no proof of this, and if it were so, he kept his affairs so closely to himself that no one could say positively that he was allied to the secret order, or was aught but an open and avowed loyal subject, although at the same time he labored heartily for the good of the people.

The hour was late, and the two children, Feodor, a handsome young fellow of seventeen, and Carlotta, a beautiful girl a year or so older, were about to retire for the night, the merchant, however, being evidently about to go out.

"Must you leave us, Nikolas?" said the wife, putting her arms about his neck. "Is the business then so urgent that it must take you away on such a wild night?"

"Yes, wife, it is most urgent," and Petroff detached his wife's arms from his neck and drew on a heavy fur-lined coat and hat, enveloping his form from head to foot.

The son and daughter bade their father good-night, and then the young man, hanging back an instant with his foot on the stair leading to the rooms above, said earnestly:

"I saw Peter Laszinski loitering about the house to-day, and with him a man of sinister aspect, who, I think, has the name of being a police spy. It struck me that their presence here boded no good, and when I approached they hastily withdrew."

Petroff's brow grew black, but he presently replied quietly:

"I have nothing to fear from Peter Laszinski or the spies of the police. No one is more loyal to the Czar—more true to the people than myself."

"Is he in the pay of the police, father?" asked the boy.

"No one knows, and I care not. It is enough that I do not like him, but that I fear him you need not think for an instant. Good-night, my son, and God's blessings attend you while you sleep."

"I have seen him watching Carlotta on the street, and by his looks I should say he was in love."

"No more of this," said Petroff, almost sternly. "Dismiss such fancies from your brain, Feodor, and go to sleep. Business takes me out, and I will not return till late. Good-night."

The boy disappeared up the winding stairs, Petroff kissed his wife and took his departure and the woman was left alone by the cheerful fireside, while the wind howled louder than ever without and made it seem all the more cheerful within.

The boy Feodor presently returned, sat upon a thick, warm rug at his mother's feet, and, turning his handsome face, lighted by the glow of the fire, up to hers, asked:

"What takes father abroad at such an hour, and in such a storm?"

"Business, he said," was the quiet answer. "I do not seek to pry into his affairs when he is silent concerning them."

"Mother," and the boy's voice sank to a whisper, and he drew his face closer yet, "they say that my father takes part in the secret councils of the Nihilists, and that he is engaged in plots against the life of the emperor."

The woman's face blanched, and she asked in a hoarse whisper:

"Who dares say this?"

"The young men, Laszinski's son among the rest. Dark hints have been thrown out to me, and I myself have been followed by the spies of the police. In heaven's name, what is this business that takes my father away from home at such an hour and on so wild a night?"

"I have told you I know not."

"Has it aught to do with Nihilism?"

"Heaven forbid! Your father seeks the good of the people and the enlargement of their rights, but this he does by frank and open means, and not by secret, nor does he desire the death of the Czar, who, hampered as he is by the nobles, has been a good and wise sovereign."

"I wish I knew his business abroad to-night," sighed the youth, rising.

"You do not doubt him?"

"No—no, and yet— Well—well, the hour is late, and I had best go to bed. Good-night, mother," and the boy kissed his parent fondly, and once more disappeared.

He threw himself, all dressed, upon his bed, for he did not care to sleep soundly, his mind still misgiving him in regard to his father's strange absence.

Hour after hour passed, and at last he heard the clocks strike two, and then dropped off to sleep.

He was suddenly disturbed by loud voices, below, and hurrying down, beheld his mother in a state of great agitation, clinging to his father, while in the open doorway stood two men, behind whom could be seen a file of soldiers.

"What is the matter?" asked the boy, as he viewed this scene.

The soldiers now filed into the room, and the leader, putting his hand upon Petroff's shoulder, said sternly:

"Nikolas Petroff, I arrest you in the name of the Czar."

"Upon what charge?" demanded Feodor hotly, as he recognized the baleful features of Peter Laszinski just over the officer's shoulder.

"For conspiring against the life of our most noble ruler, the Czar!"

"Great heaven! My worst fears are then realized!" cried Feodor, sinking into a chair, while the poor wife, overcome by emotion, fell in a dead swoon at her husband's feet.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ARREST AND DISCOVERY.

In the royal palace all was joy and gladness, a grand fete was given to the nobles and the aristocracy of St. Petersburg, and while everything was cheerless without, nothing could exceed the brilliancy of the scene within.

Hundred of lights shed a glare over the large ballroom, bands of music discoursed sweet music behind screens of growing plants, the dancers kept up a giddy whirl, ladies and gentlemen chatted in the anterooms, wine flowed freely, and the choicest viands were consumed in the banquet hall, and the pursuit of pleasure was the one business of the hour.

The spies of the Nihilists moved freely among the guests, being unsuspected, although the agents of the police, in the guise of ladies and gentlemen or attendants, were to be met with on every hand.

In a small anteroom, apart from the grand saloon, two men spoke in whispers, being seated close to each other upon a low, cushioned divan.

One of these men was Laszinski, who had come from the meeting of the Nihilists, his companion being a spy of the police.

"The plot is well in hand, you say?" said the latter. "Would it not be well to make arrests before it goes further?"

"No, for that would spoil all. Let it proceed just as if we knew nothing."

"But the life of the Czar is at stake?"

"No; I will see that he is not harmed. The signal will be given at the proper moment."

The police spy presently departed, and Laszinski joined the throng in the banquet hall, muttering to himself:

"The life of the Czar is not as important to me as the accomplishment of my plans. Petroff banished, his wealth in my grasp, the daughter in my power, I can well congratulate myself on the success of this night's work. And that it will succeed there can be no doubt."

The hours passed, the guests departed, the lights were extinguished, the rooms closed, and quiet reigned throughout the palace.

At two o'clock the imperial guard was changed, those relieved retiring to their apartments and those taking their places being inspected by the officer in charge before proceeding to their stations.

In a small apartment used as a library or study sat the Czar of all the Russias, Alexander II., writing at an ebony desk, richly carved and ornamented, a bronze lamp suspended over his head, throwing his form and face into bold relief.

In the room, on guard, that no attempts might be made to harm his sacred person, were three of the imperial guard—tall, finely-proportioned men, dressed in glittering uniforms, swords at their sides, helmets upon their heads and pistols

in their belts, ready at a moment's notice to spring to the side of their beloved ruler and defend his life with their own.

At one side of the apartment, in full relief and flooded by the light from above, stood a tall, richly-ornamented clock, the minute-hand moving in a slow and dignified course across the face, the quiet ticking being the only sound that could be heard.

The emperor was writing and paid no more attention to his guards than if they had not been present, occasionally passing his hand across his forehead, and now and then muttering a few words to himself.

The huge clock had just chimed the first quarter after two o'clock in musical tones, the emperor had just resumed his work, when, as by a preconcerted signal, the three guards advanced to the table or desk and stood, one in front, one on the right, and one on the left of the emperor.

The man in front placed a paper in front of the sovereign, the one on the right placed a small bomb on the level top of the desk, and, quickly seizing a lighted candle, held it above the fuse.

The man on the left drew his sword and pointed to the clock.

"Sign," said the man in front.

"Make no outcry, as you value your life," muttered he on the right.

"Two minutes remain," added the man on the left. "Sign or take the consequences."

"What are these papers?" asked the emperor, quietly, like the brave man he was.

"The liberation of the serfs, the pardons of political prisoners, greater rights for the people."

The emperor glanced over the papers, the three men watching his every movement, and then said:

"You demand too much. What if I refuse?"

"It will be at the cost of your life," answered the first man, sternly. "If you do not sign in one minute, this bomb shall be fired and you and all of us be blown into eternity."

The Czar gave a momentary shudder, and said:

"You are willing to risk your lives with mine, if I refuse?"

"Yes," answered all three men in a breath.

"Sign."

"Or I fire the fuse."

"In half a minute."

Thus spoke the three men, one after the other, in low, determined tones.

The minute-hand of the clock moved slowly and steadily over the disk, and the emperor gave it a quick glance.

Whatever thoughts might have been passing within his bosom, his face gave no outward sign of emotion, for it was as impassive as ever.

No one ever doubted the moral and physical courage of the late Czar of Russia, and certainly he needed it at this trying moment.

His own erect attitude, his calm, brave face, the stern expression of the determined men who confronted him, the hour, the place and the excitement, all made up a scene which could hardly be equaled in dramatic interest.

The emperor took up the pen and seemed about to affix his name to the papers before him.

At that instant doors upon two sides of the apartment were suddenly flung open, and a crowd of armed men poured into the room.

The man with the light was seized and thrown to the floor, the document was swept from the table, and in an instant all three were prisoners.

"You are safe, sir?" asked an officer, pressing forward.

"God always protects the Czar!" answered the emperor, loftily, rising to his feet and looking calmly around upon the throng in the room.

"We have but this moment discovered the plot," continued the officer, "and feared that we were too late."

"Who has been the instrument ordained by fate to defeat the designs of these wicked men?" asked the emperor.

"Laszinski, your highness, an officer of police, known as Shobeleif."

"Let him advance."

Peter Laszinski came forward, darted a quick glance at one of the prisoners, who stood directly in front of the emperor, and then knelt at the Czar's feet.

The crowd pressed forward, there was some little confusion for an instant, and then the guards cleared a space in front of the emperor and the spy.

"Peter Laszinski, we know how to reward such services as

yours," said the emperor. "Rise, my son, and be assured of our lasting esteem."

The spy arose, and then a sudden cry was heard:

"One of the prisoners has escaped."

"You know them all, Laszinski," cried the chief officer of police. "Which is it? Look well at the others."

"It is Nikolas Petroff. I know where he lives," cried the lying scoundrel. "Quick, a guard, and we may trap him yet."

The other prisoners were hurried away, and a search made for the missing man, who, it did not seem possible, could escape, even although he was dressed as one of the royal body-guards, his features having been observed by every one present.

He was not to be found, however, and meanwhile a strong guard was sent to the house of Nikolas Petroff, Laszinski acting as guide.

"All works well thus far," muttered the spy, "and now we are in time to trap the game, if no mistake has been made."

As the guards approached the house a man was seen to enter it, and the spy cried eagerly:

"There he is. It is as I said. He has come here first of all. Quick, we must not lose sight of him."

The soldiers pressed forward and thundered on the door of the house with their carbines.

"Open, in the name of the Czar!" they cried.

"Who is there?" asked Petroff from within, while a woman's voice speaking in frightened tones could be heard.

"Open the door."

"I will, when I know who knocks."

"The Czar himself!"

The door was broken in, the sergeant or leader of the soldiers advanced and placed his hand on Petroff's shoulder.

Young Feodor at this moment came into the room from above, and saw the evil face of Laszinski in the doorway.

"Nikolas Petroff, I arrest you in the Czar's name."

"For what offense?"

"Conspiring against the life of the emperor."

The poor wife fell in a swoon, and Feodor, darting forward, cried impetuously:

"It is false! No man lives more loyal than my father."

"It is true!" hissed Laszinski. "Fifty men saw him to-night threatening the life of the emperor. He escaped us once, but now we have him."

"There is no doubt of it," added the officer. "I saw him myself, and I never forget faces. If he is innocent, let him account for his time this night."

Feodor trembled, for he remembered the secret mission upon which his father had gone.

"I am innocent," said Petroff. "I have not been in the royal palace to-night."

"Nor disguised as one of the royal guards?" sneered Laszinski. "You have changed your clothes quickly, but luckily we saw you enter, and you cannot swear that you have not been out."

"I am innocent of this awful charge, and do not fear to face my accusers," said Petroff bravely. "Take me before the judges. I would face the Czar himself and avow my innocence."

"Take him away," hissed Laszinski, "and search the house. Doubtless you will find it to be a secret meeting place of Nihilists."

"I have no orders to do that, but the police shall guard it."

Petroff was led away, bidding Feodor to look to his mother and not attempt to follow.

All this time Carlotta had not appeared, and when the boy had restored his mother to consciousness he hurried upstairs to his sister's room and knocked on the door.

There was no response, and the summons was repeated with a similar result.

Then, with a strange fear oppressing him, the boy opened the door, entered the room and cast a quick glance around.

A cold draught of air struck upon him and he saw that the casement was open.

The light from the street below revealed to him that the bed occupied by his sister was empty, the covers thrown upon the floor, and the girl's dresses and outer wraps missing.

"She has been carried away," he cried, "and since I went below. My father arrested, my sister abducted, my mother frantic with grief; the blow is more than I can bear."

Then, glancing out of the open window, where there was evidences of the poor girl having been removed by force, the excited boy exclaimed passionately:

"This is your work, Peter Laszinski, but, as I live, you shall pay for it with your life, or I shall give up my own."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE EXILE.

In a bare, cold-looking room, the walls and floors of which were of stone, were gathered something less than a dozen persons, more than half of whom were soldiers.

Seated before a table placed upon a small elevated platform were two men whose looks denoted that they had often been brought in contact with men of the first classes, and in a manner not pleasant to the latter.

In front of this platform, on the floor, stood a man of noble bearing, in whose face were the traces of great mental suffering.

Near by, at a stone table, sat two other men, the rest being soldiers on guard.

The man standing was Nikolas Petroff, and he was about to undergo an examination upon the grave charge brought against him.

"Petroff," said one of the men on the raised platform, "you have hitherto borne a good reputation, and for this reason you have been granted a hearing."

Otherwise he would have been thrown into prison, executed, or taken away to Siberia unheard, as he knew too well, having known of too many such cases to be ignorant of the mode of procedure usually adopted.

"You know the charge," continued the examiner, "and have declared your innocence. What have you to say further?"

"I have my past good character to offer, my well-known loyalty. I have been mistaken for some one else."

The examiner made a sign to one of the soldiers, and two of them departed, and presently brought in two other prisoners of commanding stature.

"Do you know this man?" asked the judge of the two newcomers.

They were silent, and the judge continued:

"Remember the knout, and do not defy us."

One of the men trembled violently, and answered:

"He is the man who acted with us in our plot last night. He presented the papers for the emperor to sign."

"It is false!" cried Petroff, turning upon the man. "I never saw you in all my life. I was not in the palace, knew nothing of this affair until my arrest."

"Remember," said the judge sternly, "if you swear falsely to save yourself, it shall avail you nothing."

"As there is a God, I believe he is the man," returned the other. "I would not swear falsely against any one, least of all one of your order."

"You have seen him in your councils, then?"

"No. We three were told off to do this work. I did not see him before entering the palace."

"Why do you remember him, then?"

"Because of his face, his figure and his air of command."

"Enough!" and at a sign from the judge the two prisoners were taken away.

"Where did you spend last night?" asked the second judge of Petroff.

"At home until eleven o'clock. I then went out on business."

"Where?"

"To the house of a friend."

"Where was this?"

"I cannot tell."

"Why not?"

"I have sworn to be silent. It was a matter of business between us. If he will speak, I will; otherwise, I must remain silent."

"When did you return?"

"At half-past two in the morning."

"You were not in the imperial palace?"

"No."

"You are not a Nihilist?"

"No."

"You have long been suspected by the secret police."

"That is nothing. There are wicked men there, as everywhere else, who do not scruple to swear falsely, when interest commands."

"Confess your guilt, and the punishment will be lighter."

"I have no guilt to confess."

At this moment the door opened, and Laszinski, the spy, entered, accompanied by two men, bearing a wet bundle between them.

This was thrown upon the floor, and the spy said, addressing the judges:

"This bundle has been found at the bottom of the Neva, near the bridge, and on the way to the prisoner's house. There the ice has been open for some days. It had better be examined."

The bundle was soaked with water and mud, and particles of ice were clinging to it, but even in this condition it was easily seen that it was a uniform of some kind.

One of the soldiers opened it, and spread it out upon the floor, when the handsome uniform of a member of the royal body-guard was exposed to view, the coat being wrapped about the helmet, which contained a heavy stone in order to make it sink the easier.

Besides the uniform itself there was a small, round packet, sometimes worn as an under-vest by civilians, and in this there were two inner pockets.

The rascal has thrown away his own garment in his haste," said the judge. "Examine it."

The soldier did so, and drew from the inside pockets a number of letters and papers, which were handed to the judges.

"Petroff, this confirms your guilt," said the chief judge. "These letters are addressed to you, these papers refer to your business."

"The vest is marked on the collar, 'N. P.,' in plain characters," said the soldier.

"It is all plain enough," cried one of the men at the stone table. "The man escaped from the palace in the confusion, hurried homeward, and on the way rolled up this tall-tale uniform and threw it into the river. In his haste he has thrown away his inner vest, and this now tells a story that no one can deny."

Petroff folded his arms and said nothing, and Laszinski, now coming forward, said in a tone of triumph:

"Most gracious judges, this man has hitherto been my friend, but now that such a hideous charge rests upon him I must let my duty to the Czar overcome my affection. I had the good fortune to discover a foul plot last night, and was on hand in time to prevent its consummation."

"In the palace I recognized Petroff, and a score will tell you that I could not help looking fixedly at him when I advanced before the Czar. Then I did not wish to speak, but when the man escaped many knew that I had looked closely at him, and I was obliged to own the truth. This man, Nikolas Petroff, is the man I saw in the palace last night, and I will swear to it."

"Liar!" hissed Petroff, springing forward and seizing Laszinski by the throat as if to choke the truth from him.

The soldiers quickly interfered, and Petroff was torn away and placed between two guards.

"Do you still deny your guilt?" asked the judge.

"I am mistaken for some one else. It would not be possible for a man to go from the palace to my house in less than half an hour, stopping on the Neva Bridge, and this plot was discovered after two o'clock. I was home by half-past. Let me go before the emperor. If he swears I am one of the men engaged in this plot, I am content."

"Fifty others have done so, your accomplices have done it, and what need of other confirmation?"

"It is my only request."

"Well, it shall be granted."

Petroff was then led away to a dark and noisome cell underground, and Laszinski, leaving the prison, muttered triumphantly:

"Ha, ha! The fool thinks the Czar will intercede for him. The emperor will never hear of him again. The case will be dismissed, a few masses said in the cathedral, mention of the transportation of a few state prisoners will be made, and Nikolas Petroff will be forgotten and never mentioned again. The Czar has too much to do to remember everything."

Nikolas Petroff remained in prison for several days, seeing no one, knowing not if he were condemned to die, and receiving no message from the outer world.

Feodor, his son, sought him in the various prisons, but neither saw nor heard of him, and as day after day passed the conviction forced itself upon him that his father had been quietly executed in order not to create excitement.

The boy appealed to some powerful friends of his father's, and obtained an audience with the Czar, the emperor promising to have the matter looked into, referring it to his minister

of police, who referred it down again to some one else, until it came to Laszinski himself, who smiled wickedly, and said to himself:

"An investigation, eh? That must not be. We must attend to this matter without delay. Too much time has been lost. The estate of this exile does not appear to be what I thought, and the girl refuses to have anything to say to me. I must get rid of the thing at once."

The next day, as Feodor was going to one of the prisons to make further inquiries, a bell was heard to toll, and a dismal procession appeared.

A number of political prisoners, exiled to Siberia, were about leaving the prison, and many stopped to gaze at the devoted band.

They were marched out under a strong guard, heavily manacled, two by two, the chains clanking dismally as they walked.

Suddenly Feodor Petroff caught sight of the face of one of the prisoners, and, uttering an agonized cry, he attempted to press forward.

"Father!"

The soldiers beat him back with their carbines, and the sad procession passed on.

"Oh, my God! My father, whither are they taking you?"

"To Siberia!" hissed a voice, and, looking up, the boy beheld the traitor Laszinski smiling wickedly upon him.

"To Siberia!" gasped the boy, and then, overcome by the fearful thoughts which those two words conjured up, Feodor fell senseless on his face in the snow, and appeared like one dead.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ON THE ROAD.

The minister of police, Kitzoff, was busy in the private room of his suite of offices at the imperial palace when an official entered and said:

"A lad to see your excellency, the son of the merchant Petroff."

"What does he want?"

"To intercede in his father's behalf."

"The man has been released. What else can I do?"

"The lad says not; that he has been sent to the mines."

"Have you the latest records? Bring them to me."

A large book was placed in front of the minister, and he swept his eye hastily over the last few pages.

"There is no record here of the man having been sent away," he said testily. "The boy is mistaken. Dismiss him."

At that moment, however, young Petroff burst into the room, threw himself at the minister's feet, and exclaimed excitedly:

"Hear me, my lord minister, for a moment. A great wrong has been done, and I was promised that my father should be released. Instead of that he is now on his way to a living death in the Siberian mines. In God's name send a message to have him detained until the matter can be investigated! The Czar is surely not so cruel as to condemn an innocent man unheard."

The minister was evidently moved by this touching appeal, for he said kindly:

"Are you sure of this?"

"I saw him march out of the prison but yesterday, on his way to the train which would bear him upon his first stage. Oh, my Lord, enough harm has been done already, and now we deserve some mercy. The neighbors brought the news to my poor mother, and the shock was more than she could bear. She is dead!"

"Ivanoff, send word to the prisons and get a list of the men lately sent away. Are you not mistaken, boy?" the minister added to Feodor. "Your father's name is not mentioned in the reports."

"I saw him with my own eyes. There can be no mistake. Would a son not know his own father? I tell you he is on his way to the mines, my mother is dead, my sister carried off, our home is broken up! I appeal to the mercy of the Czar to have this terrible wrong redressed."

"Your father was accused of seeking the death of our most august emperor."

"The charge was false. The man who escaped resembled him. Send for the other prisoners, and they will tell you that this is so."

"They have been transported."

But at least send word to the nearest station at which the detachment will stop and have my father remanded."

"That can be done if his innocence is proven."

At this moment Ivanoff re-entered, and said briefly:

"The man Petroff is not in the prison. His name is not in the lists. He may have been discharged."

"Run home, lad," said the minister, "you will doubtless find your father there, or learn where he may be found. No man is condemned unjustly in Russia. He has been discharged, I doubt not, and can be easily found."

"But if not?"

"Go to the office of the detective police. It is their business to look up missing men. This is the bureau of justice and has nothing to do with the case."

"Justice," said Feodor, bitterly, as he rose from his knees. "There is no such thing as justice to be had when such vipers as Laszinski are the confidential agents of government."

"Take care, boy," said the minister sternly. "The knout deals severely with those who have too saucy a tongue. Dismiss him, Ivanoff, and do not again admit him, on your peril."

Feodor left the palace and returned to his forlorn home where no sign of his father was found, and gave himself up to the bitterest reflections.

Some kind neighbors gave the boy shelter that night, and on the next day his mother was buried by them, there being no money in the house and Feodor possessing none.

Day after day passed and the boy sought vainly for intelligence of his father, being refused admission to the minister, though he was told that inquiries had been made and an order given to detain Petroff on the frontier until his case could be investigated.

Delay followed delay, and it was three weeks before Feodor was finally informed that there was no such prisoner as Petroff among those recently exiled, that the man had been discharged and was probably in some other city.

And all this time the spy Laszinski smiled and rubbed his greasy hands, and as every effort of the brave boy was baffled would say to himself:

"He will soon tire of this and give up the search. If he could harm me he, too, should be sent to the mines, but I do not fear boys, and he is powerless. See the Czar? He does not know what a wall of brass separates the emperor from his people, or he would never attempt so foolish a thing as that."

Weeks and months passed, and the poor boy, untiring in his efforts to obtain justice, had learned nothing of his father or sister, and was forced to depend on friends for very existence even.

The house had been declared confiscated, and was now used as a barracks by the soldiers, and Feodor had no longer a roof to shelter his head.

The oftener he sought the aid of the police the more coolly he was received, until at last no one heeded him, and he was finally told that if he presented himself again he would be locked up as a vagrant and made to sweep the streets at night with common drunkards, thieves and low criminals.

"One thing alone remains," said the heroic boy to himself, at last. "I will go to Siberia and seek my father among its dreary wilds and on its barren steppes. The pitiless skies, the sterile plains, the rugged mountains cannot be more cruel than these so-called ministers of justice. Bah! The word is but a mockery! There is no justice!"

A day or two after making this resolution, and while preparing for departure, the boy met Laszinski upon one of the bridges of the Neva.

The man was about to pass without noticing Feodor, when the latter stepped in front of him and demanded, hotly:

"Monsieur Laszinski, where is my father, where is my sister, why have your boasted tribunals of justice refused to hear my prayers?"

"Don't detain me, beggar," hissed the spy. "The cell and the lash are only fit for such as you. Stand aside, or my whip will enforce my commands."

"What have you done with my sister? You professed to love her. You!" with bitter contempt. "You have taken her away. Where is she?"

"In the brothel or in prison, among other low creatures, most likely."

Feodor's blood boiled at this cruel insult, and, with a cry of rage, he hurled his slight form upon the giant frame of the spy, wrested the latter's whip from his grasp, and struck him a blow across the cheek with the steel-wound lash.

The blow laid open the cheek of the spy from temple to

lip and caused the red blood to spurt forth, the scoundrel being unable to repress a cry of pain.

"I have marked you well, Peter Laszinski, and henceforth I shall know you!" cried Feodor, as he hurled the whip in the man's face and dashed across the bridge.

People were approaching and guards were within call, the boy's only safety being now in flight, for, once he was taken, he knew the villainous spy would hound him to the death, and that if he wished to carry out his mission he must seek shelter at once.

He avoided the wide streets, but darted at once down a narrow lane, turning swiftly into a winding alley scarce six feet across, dodging down a court, leaping a wall and making his way through a cluster of wretched dwellings into a maze of blind alleys, crooked streets and no-thoroughfares, until at last the sounds of pursuit had died away and he felt that he was safe.

Waiting until night had settled over the city, he made his way to the house of his friends, keeping a careful watch for spies or police agents, for he knew that Laszinski would have a search made for him.

He entered the house without being observed by any one, and then hurriedly informed his host of what had occurred, and the need of immediate flight.

His preparations had all been made, and there only remained the eluding of the vigilance of the police between him and freedom.

"I have secured disguises and a passport," said his friend, "and you had best depart at once, though you are welcome to stay as long as you like."

"I know that," answered Feodor, "but I will not imperil your safety by longer remaining under your roof."

At this moment there came a loud knock at the door, and, looking out of the window, the master of the house beheld a captain and a file of soldiers.

"You will find what you want in the next room," he said hurriedly to the boy. "Make your way through the rear court, and thence to the railroad station."

In the next room Feodor found the dress usually worn by old men, together with a white wig and beard, a staff and knapsack, and, on a table, a passport made out in the name of Wenreslas Nikolaoff, allowing his undisturbed passage through Russia and all its provinces.

There was also a purse containing a liberal sum of money, and as Feodor had none of his own he gladly accepted this, resolving to return it as soon as possible.

Putting on the disguise over his own garments and carefully arranging the wig and beard, strapping on the knapsack and taking the staff in his hand, Feodor glanced around and saw a figure similar to his own standing before him.

He was surprised to find that it was but his own reflection in a large mirror, and he saw at once that the disguise was complete and deception most perfect.

He could hear men talking below, and as he was about to leave two soldiers entered the room where he was, his friend accompanying them.

"My grandfather, gentlemen, about to start on a journey to his home in Tobolsk," said the Russian.

"Where is your passport?" demanded one of the guards.

"What did you say?" piped up Feodor, in a shrill treble, putting one hand to his ear and drawing in his lips, which he kept in constant motion, in the manner of old men.

"His hearing is bad," said the Russian. "His passport is correct—I have examined it myself."

"Come this way," said a third officer, entering the room, "I think he is concealed above."

The three left by another door and Feodor hobbled out of the room and out of the house by a rear door, across a court and into another street, where a drosky or carriage was awaiting him.

He entered, was driven to the railroad station, his ticket having already been procured, and shortly afterward took his seat in a second-class compartment, settling down in an obscure corner and attracting no more than a passing notice from his fellow travelers.

The train left the station and sped over the snow-covered landscape, the lights along the way appeared at longer intervals and then disappeared, and through the night the train rattled on, the passengers asleep, and the guard ceasing to make his rounds.

"At last I am free!" thought our hero, "and now for Siberia, to find my father and free him from his cruel slavery. Heaven speed me on my errand!"

## CHAPTER V.

### A STARTLING RECOGNITION.

The sky was dull and leaden, the wind swept across the plains, night was approaching and a little band of weary travelers was hastening with all speed toward a small posting-station a few miles away.

Two men on horses led the mournful procession, and two others in the rear hurried on the poor travelers with whip and spear, alternating this brutal treatment with harsh words and scornful railings.

The heavy clanking of chains could be heard, and now and then some poor wretch staggered with pain, the brutal drivers urging on their faltering steps by blows and execrations.

The party was a band of political exiles bound for the mines, and as night was at hand the captain in charge was anxious to reach the posting-station, a few versts further on, that he might obtain rest and refreshment.

"No lagging now," he cried, as he looked behind him. "If any fall by the way the wolves will have a supper, I can tell you, for I will not stop to pick you up, so keep on at your best, if you value your wretched lives."

"Death was preferable to the agonies which we are sure to suffer," murmured a man of middle age; "and were it not for the thought of my poor children, I would willingly die."

Faster and faster yet the party hurried on, until at last a half hour after dark, the posting-station was reached, and the exiles were marched into the court-yard of a gloomy prison.

The commander of this place came out and addressed the leader of the party, who respectfully saluted him, with:

"What company is this?"

"Captain Ivanoff's. I have fifteen prisoners. Here is the list."

The official glanced over it rapidly, and then said:

"There are eighteen names here. Where are the others?"

"Behind on the road. Live men are trouble enough, without bringing along dead ones."

"Call off the names and march them inside."

Captain Ivanoff took the list and called off, in a loud voice, the names of the poor prisoners, one at a time.

"Nickolas Petroff."

A man stepped out from the head of the rank, answered to his name and passed under the arched entrance into the gloomy recesses of the prison.

"Vladamir Grodjinsky."

A tall, well-formed man stepped out, and without lowering his head or changing his proud mien in the least, passed the commandant and entered the prison.

"Ivan Wollosky."

There was no answer to the name, and Captain Ivanoff checked it off on his list with a heavy red mark, passing on to the next, each man as he answered to his name making a salute and following his fellows to the miserable pest-house beyond.

The prison was already overcrowded, and the new lot were led into a room where there were now more than it could hold, all huddled together like sheep, some sick, some wounded or suffering with putrid sores, some on the very verge of death.

The air was foul and heavy with poisonous vapors, the floor was damp and ill-smelling, the walls swarmed with vermin, and the place was unfit for animals, to say nothing of human beings.

Even in this fearful place friends met and exchanged mournful greetings, the jailers being content to stand without and let the prisoners say or do what they chose, the air of the den being enough to make them prefer the outside to the inside of such a place.

Petroff had been in terrible places before during his weary march, but this surpassed all his former experiences.

"It is a veritable plague house," he muttered to his nearest companion, Grodjinsky.

"You are Nikolas Petroff?" asked the man. "A merchant of St. Petersburg?"

"I was, but alas, all has been swept from me by my perjured accusers."

"Of what are you charged?"

"Seeking the life of the Czar, threatening him with death unless he signed certain papers."

"What! Do they accuse you of being one of the three

daring men who, in the dress of the imperial guard, entered the royal chamber and very nearly accomplished what they had sworn to do?"

"They say so, but I was not present."

"I know it, for I was one of the men who conceived the plot, and I know who were told off to carry it out. That villain, Laszinski, betrayed us. We thought him a Nihilist; he was the spy of the police."

"Laszinski! I know the villain. He swore against me on my trial. The man is a perjured knave."

"And you are charged with being in the party that confronted the Czar? Then this villain has some scheme of his own to further and wishes you out of his way."

Food was now thrown to the prisoners, not brought to them, and there was a wild scramble for the wretched stuff, no one obtaining sufficient, and some having to go without any.

"Do they think us dogs," hissed Grodjinsky, "that they toss our food to us? Mayhap the dogs will set their teeth in the jailers' throats some day and make them feel the agony we feel. If the Czar is indeed responsible for all this, Nihilism has much to avenge."

In such a crowded place it was impossible to lie down, and those who needed sleep would have to contrive to get against the side walls or lean upon some of their comrades.

Several died in the night, and Petroff was glad when morning came, and there would be a chance of breathing the free air of heaven once more.

Several companies of prisoners were expected, however, and as a large party was to be made up and sent off under a strong guard, it was decided to wait for the others, and thus an extra day or two must be passed in the hideous den called a prison.

Grodjinsky and Petroff managed, with one or two others, to be allowed to occupy a small outhouse in the prison-yard, and this was infinitely preferable to remaining within, where they felt that they would die like their unfortunate companions.

One noon, upon the third day of their stay in this place, a gong was sounded, the great gates were opened, and a new lot of prisoners, the second for that day, were marched into the inclosure.

Petroff and his friend were in their miserable dwelling, looking out as the gong sounded, Petroff going to the door to watch the prisoners.

Suddenly he uttered a smothered exclamation, and would have rushed into the court-yard had not his companion prevented him.

"What is it you see? Some friend, some relative, perhaps?"

"Oh heavens! to think of her being here. So young, so tender. What has she done that she should be sent away, perhaps to lose her life in the desert wilds of Siberia?"

"Of whom do you speak?" asked Grodjinsky. "If there is one you love outside, do not make it known, or she will be torn from you."

These words brought the man to himself, and he answered more calmly:

"How can I remain unmoved when I see her I love best of all brought to this hideous place, know what she must suffer during the terrible march?"

"You must do so, if you would save her from a worse fate. If these men know you love her, they will take her from you, that your suffering may be greater. They have no pity in their hearts."

"Look," said Petroff, "do you see a young girl in that company, tall, lithe and beautiful, with jet black tresses, and deep, melting eyes? Tell me, is she not a marvel of beauty?"

"Yes, I see her, and I would she were less beautiful, for her own sake and for yours. She is your daughter?"

"Yes."

"Do not recognize her, and I will try and get a word with her, so as to give her a similar caution. The time will come when you may speak with her, but it is not yet."

The prisoners were now all in the yard, and those inside were now brought out, that the weary march might be continued.

Grodjinsky managed to approach Carlotta when the guards were busy at other things, and said to her:

"My child, tremble not at what I am about to say. Your father is here, but you must not know him, must not see him. I know this is hard, but it is necessary for your safety and for his."

Carlotta would have screamed, but the Nihilist restrained her, and said, quickly:

"Be brave and silent, as you value his life and your own peace."

"My father here?" she whispered. "You are his friend—he knows I am here?"

"Yes; he saw you, would have run to you, but I forbade him. I know how the evil passions of these soldiers run riot when once they give them rein. You shall be protected, fear not, but for the present you must know no one, see no one."

"I will obey," said the girl, bravely, "though the task is a hard one."

"You will be rewarded some day for your self-denial," said the man. "Trust to your father and myself, and all will yet be well."

The prisoners who were to form the company were now marched out, and although Petroff passed close to his daughter, neither he nor she gave the least signs of recognition.

Watchful eyes were upon them, for it was suspected that the girl had relatives among the prisoners, but watch as they would, the prying eyes of the captains could detect nothing.

The sad procession passed out of the gates, and the long march was resumed, the heart of the poor exile nigh to bursting at the thought that his daughter was so near, and that he must not know her, that some day, however, he could clasp her to his heart, and that if escape were denied to them they might at least die together.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SUDDEN ALARM.

The band of exiles, diminished in number by cold, hunger and the hardships and dangers of the way, had reached the mountains and paused at the foot for the night.

They were in open camp, as there was no station or prison at hand, but as there was little likelihood of any one attempting to escape in such a place, the guards were not over-vigilant, relaxing their usually strict watch for the sake of greater comfort.

It was at the dead of night, and Grodjinsky, who occupied a rude tent with Petroff and two others, awoke his companion, and said, cautiously:

"The hour has come for escape. I have ridden myself of my chains and will do the same for you."

"Ah, you have bribed the guards?"

"I obtained a file some days since, and have severed my fetters. I had money concealed on my person which even their vigilance could not detect, and money has proved potent, as it always does."

While he was speaking Grodjinsky had knelt at the feet of his friend, and with the file, well saturated with oil, was working away at the largest link of the chains about Petroff's ankles and waist, and in a short time had torn away the heavy bars which connected the bands on the ankles, to that about the middle.

"The others may remain for the present," muttered the Nihilist, and, awaking others, he released them as he had released Petroff.

"Come," he whispered, "take these irons as weapons of defense, and follow me."

The four men passed out of the tent, and Grodjinsky led them to the edge of the camp, where he left them for a moment while he went back.

In a few moments an uproar was heard, and the Nihilist suddenly appeared with Carlotta in his arms.

"Our escape is discovered!" he gasped; "but there is still time."

At this moment three or four guards armed with muskets appeared on the edge of the camp.

"Upon them!" hissed the Nihilist, and he and his companions, brandishing the heavy irons, fell upon their guards and beat them to the ground, where they lay like logs.

In a second Grodjinsky had stripped the long uniform coat from one of the victims, thrown it about his own, donned the dead man's helmet, seized his musket, and was transformed into a soldier in an instant.

The others quickly followed his example, and as other guards hurried up, Petroff, taking the lead, cried, hoarsely:

"They have escaped! After them before they get away!"

Carlotta clung to her father's side, and the four prisoners

hastened out upon the sterile plain and toward the mountain before the newcomers could question them.

Drums were beating in the camp, men ran hither and thither, lights flashed from one point to another, and no one seemed to know what had happened.

Petroff hurried toward the slopes, the guards following quickly, but suddenly, when at some distance from the awakened camp, the exile turned, gave a shrill whistle, and fell upon the man nearest him.

In a second Grodinsky and the other two escaped prisoners imitated Petroff's example, and before they knew it the soldiers were overpowered.

"Life for life!" shouted Grodinsky, as he brought the stock of his musket down upon the head of one of the soldiers with such force as to crush his skull and lay him dead upon the snow.

"Vengeance at last!" hissed the others, and with unrelenting ferocity they fell upon the luckless soldiers, and in a few moments, so awful had been the attack, not one remained alive.

Poor Carlotta had fainted upon witnessing these terrible scenes, but Petroff, throwing a heavy cloak over her, caught her in his arms and fled up the rugged slope in the darkness.

The others followed, keeping him in sight, and although there was no fear of immediate pursuit, continued their flight without pause.

The howling of the mountain wolves rang out upon the air, the wind whistled among the ragged crags and swept down the passes, the snow was hurled in blinding drifts against them, but still they kept on in their tireless flight.

Behind them howled the wolves, and Grodinsky muttered, with a bitter laugh:

"Those fellows will make short work of our late comrades and those who seek to follow us. It is wolf against wolf now if the brutal guards are on our track, and I don't know which I would prefer to be in pursuit."

At daylight they paused and were fortunate enough to find a cave, dry, roomy and warm, being protected by its winding shape from the winds and secure from observation should any be in pursuit.

Here they remained all day, occupying the time in getting rid of the shackles on their ankles and about their waists.

On each ankle, like a ring, was a hard circle of callous flesh caused by the weight and the constant chafing of the iron which at first had caused great pain, but which was worn with little trouble when the flesh had at last hardened.

"This is the brand of Siberia," muttered Petroff, baring his leg and exposing the ring of hard, callous flesh. "A hot iron could not have made a more indelible mark than that."

"Ay! it is the brand of Siberia indeed," assented Grodinsky, "and many a poor fellow has been betrayed by it and been taken back to a living death in the mines."

"As deep as that fatal brand sinks into my flesh," groaned Petroff, "so deep have my wrongs burned into my soul, never to be effaced. The brand of Siberia is upon my flesh, the brand of a bitter hatred is stamped upon my heart."

"So say we all," hissed Grodinsky, his face aflame with passion. "Be it our task to live and avenge these injuries done to us and to our poor countrymen. Death to aristocrats, death to the Czar and to all who serve him."

"Ay! death to him and all who serve him!" cried they all as they stood with right hands brandished aloft and the left hands firmly clasped together.

For days they remained in the cavern, one or two venturing out now and then to obtain food, bears and other animals which they shot supplying their wants.

Then they took up their dreary march, but one day a slide of snow on the mountain-side carried away one of their number and they saw him no more.

Another died before they crossed the range, and now there were left only Petroff, Grodinsky and Carlotta, the latter being shielded and cared for by the two men in every way, as otherwise she, too, might have died on the march.

The mountains were passed, and the plains beyond traversed for many a weary mile, until at last they came to a hut on the edge of a stranded forest, where they found an old man on the verge of death.

He had been an exile, he told them, but had escaped and had built this hut, where he had lived for many years, succoring others as unfortunate as himself.

Upon his person he still bore the scars of cruel blows from the knout, the impress of the heavy chains he had worn, and the marks of wounds inflicted in conflicts with the soldiers of the empire.

He was rejoiced to find that they were escaped prisoners, and asked that they bury him in the wood, giving them the use of this hut when he was dead, and imploring them to aid the distressed of his race whenever they sought shelter.

"Ay, and more than that," said Petroff, "we'll search the steppes for these unfortunates, rescue them from their brutal guards, and deal out destruction to all who serve the cruel emperor."

"Ah, then my own task will be ably carried on," murmured the old man. "You, too, have suffered like myself?"

"Yes, and I was loyal until the cruel injustice of the Czar and those about him drove me to this course. Now I swear to avenge all my wrongs and those of my people upon the head of this tyrant and his time-serving emissaries."

The old man died and was buried in the wood, and then the three homeless wanderers took up their abode in the hut, which was supplied with many comforts that the old man had gathered about him.

They hunted in the woods and mountains, they built the hut stronger and made it more of a fortress than before, and were on the constant watch for escaped prisoners as well as for parties of soldiers who they suspected might pass near.

The winter snows fell heavy all about them, the cold increased and the desert waste stretched before them in all its gloomy barrenness, but despite the danger of their situation they were happy and looked forward to their freedom at no distant day.

Carlotta was a daughter to both, and both loved her devotedly, her father no more than his friend, the girl striving to please each equally.

Thus time passed, and one day, as darkness was approaching a cry was heard outside, Petroff seizing his gun and running to the door, which he threw open.

Grodinsky stood just behind him, and Carlotta peered over their shoulders into the gathering darkness.

A man was approaching the hut across the snow, and behind him came half a dozen soldiers.

"Stand back!" cried Petroff, leveling his weapon at those advancing, whom he took for enemies.

Grodinsky seized his weapon and looked defiant, while Carlotta uttered a piercing shriek.

"Father, do not fire!" she cried. "It is he—it is my brother! Do you not know him? It is Feodor!"

The old man lowered his weapon, and at this moment the figure in advance rushed up, fell upon his knees at the feet of Petroff, and cried:

"Save me, father; save me from these fiends!"

"My son!" cried Petroff, and in an instant he had clasped the youth to his heart.

It was indeed Feodor Petroff, and the sundered family were at last reunited in the wilds of Siberia.

"I am pursued!" cried the young man. "See! the villains are still in pursuit!"

"We will see which shall prosper, the right or the wrong!" hissed the Nihilist, and then the whole party hurried into the house, prepared to defend it against a host of their enemies.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WITHIN A HAIR'S-BREADTH OF CAPTURE.

"All passports!" shouted the guard, as the train bearing Feodor Petroff from St. Petersburg neared a station on the confines of one of the provinces.

Our hero aroused himself, produced his passport, and held it carelessly in his hand for the inspection of the guard, who, when the train stopped, went rapidly from coach to coach.

"We must keep an eye on him," he heard one guard say to another. "He is on board this train."

Of whom could they be speaking but himself?

Such was Feodor's first thought.

"Yes, the telegraph message says so distinctly," replied the second guard. "You must examine the passports carefully, and seize his for being falsely made out."

There could be no doubt of it now, and Feodor began to think of some plan of outwitting the guards.

Word had evidently been sent that he was traveling under a false name, and although he had committed no crime, he knew that he could be detained, on suspicion, thrown into prison, and then, without the shade of an examination, sent

away in exile without baring the least charge to clear himself.

"I told him we were on his way, and he had already taken his passport from his pocket and had placed it across his knee ready for the inspection of the police agent.

In a twinkling Feodor had snatched off his own passport for the edict. The man evidently thought it was not to be examined, for, with a start, he suddenly awoke when the transfer had been made, and took Feodor's passport out of his pocket.

At that moment the guard had reached the place where the young man was sitting, and demanded to see all passports.

Feodor handed them the one he now had; they examined it carefully, stamped it, passed it back, and then addressed the man sitting next to him.

The man looked confused, and passed his papers to the guard, who at once exchanged quick expressions of satisfaction.

"Werresius Nikolaoff, eh? That is not your name!" cried one of the guards.

"Of course it is not," said the traveler, in great confusion. "We thought as much. You had better wait a bit."

Both guards laid hold of him to drag him from the couch, where it was safe to make a vigorous protest.

"But, gentlemen, I do not understand," he cried. "My passport is perfectly regular. I have the emperor's—"

They would not listen, but dragged him from the couch and hurried him away, other agents taking their places in examining passports.

"He will be released after a while," thought Feodor, "and then I will be safe. There was no help for it."

The train proceeded on its way in a few minutes, and Feodor breathed more freely, resolving that, come what would, he would not be taken.

During the night, which presently arrived, he disposed of his wig and beard, throwing them out of the window as the train rattled on, the action being entirely unobserved.

At Vishni-Novgorod he left the train and obtained a post carriage to take him to the next town of any importance, the rail-road going in a direction different to that which he proposed to take.

At the passing-house he saw, to his terror, the spy Luszinski, walking up and down, evidently on the lookout for some one.

"If he discovers me the game is up!" murmured the boy, as he slunk into a corner and covered himself with the furs which the vehicle contained.

Luszinski came to the door of the carriage, as it paused for an instant, looked in, saw nothing, and said to the driver:

"You have not seen a little old man, with a white beard and a knapsack?"

"No, your excellency, only a boy, and he seems to have left," glancing as he spoke into the carriage.

Then he drove on slowly, and Feodor heard the spy mutter to himself:

"Aha! he has thrown off his disguise, then. How did he manage to change the passports? The other man was not in the plot, for he is one of our own agents."

"A lucky escape, that," thought Feodor, who remained in hiding until the carriage had passed well beyond the town.

At this time the driver turned his head and said, cautiously:

"There is no danger now, sir. You can show yourself."

"You knew I was hidden?" cried the boy, throwing off the furs and leaning forward.

"To be sure, but I would not betray you to that scoundrel, I know him well, and guessed that his errand concerned you. Does he think I would betray the son of Nekta Petroff? Not I, indeed."

"Ah, you know me, then?"

"Yes, I know your father; he has often been to the town on business, and you have his face. Trust to me, and I will bear you in safety."

The driver then whipped up his horse, and Feodor, sitting back among the furs, quickly dropped off to sleep, feeling more secure than at any time during the journey.

Mile after mile rolled behind them, one passing house after another was passed, and at last they reached a point beyond which the driver's duties would not carry him, as they were in another province, and he could go no further without special permission.

He secured a passport for the boy, making it out in another name, and gave him valuable instruction as to how he should proceed.

"May heaven prosper you on your errand," he said, when they at last parted, "and may you and I see a better day for Russia in the near future. Good luck attend you, your excellency."

They embraced warmly, shook hands and went their several ways, the latter returning back to his home. Feodor had to go to a bleak, desolate country which now stretched before him.

Over the plains, across the Ural range, through the towns of Orenburg, Cheliabinsk, and others to Tomsk the brave lad made his way, now by horse, now in rude vehicles driven by rough peasants, in danger from flooded rivers, wolves, storms and a hundred other causes, but pressing bravely on in spite of all.

At one place and another he made inquiries of Captain Ivanoff's party, having learned the name of the officer in command, and after parting with his fated friend.

He discovered finally that several parties had been consolidated, and was certain that his father was with the general conspiracy, and he therefore pushed on with renewed exertions.

At Terek his money gave out, and he might have to go to Irkustk, the prospect was not a very creditable one.

He procured food, a gun and ammunition, and then, learning that the party had passed through Tomsk not more than a week previous, decided to brave the dangers of the journey on foot.

His inquiries in the town failed to arouse the suspicions of any of the local police agents, and they sought to detain him.

As he was leaving the humble tavern where he had been staying for a day or so, one of the dignitaries stopped him and asked:

"Where are you going?"

"To Irkustk."

"Your passport?"

Feodor showed it to the agent, who smiled and said:

"This is useless. Your name is Petroff, but this is made out in the name of Federoff."

"How do you know my name is Petroff?"

"You are the son of a condemned Nihilist. He passed through Tomsk a week ago. You have caught up on him with less than half as much load of you than you will ever get. Persist in following him, and you will find yourself in the mines."

"Is it a crime, then, to be my father's son?"

"It is one to follow and attempt to rescue him."

"How do you know that such is my intention?"

"We judge from appearances."

"Then you have been deceived."

"Of that we alone must judge. Come with me."

A horse stood in front of the stable-door near at hand, and, giving the animal one glance, Feodor said quickly:

"Let me go into the house for my papers and I will join you."

"No; you were already about to depart. This is but a subterfuge."

"You are bound to take me, then?"

"Yes."

"Then catch me first."

With these words the brave boy suddenly struck the officer a stunning blow in the face which hurled him over backward into a snowdrift.

In another minute Feodor had cleared the yard, jumped upon the back of the horse in waiting, and, dashing right through the stable, urged his steed through a large window in the rear, plunged on over all sorts of rubbish, cleared a hedge and struck into the post road.

The officer fled to his feet and called loudly for assistance, but before it arrived and Feodor's flight had been discovered the boy was a mile away, and, putting a greater distance between him and pursuit at every bound.

Hours were passed and a curse pronounced; but Feodor put forth his legs and arms, which he could use to the south of him, knowing that it could not do to appear in any of the settled districts again, for he had to cross.

If I had a goodly sum left in the open country he could be gone for a long distance, and he therefore prayed that the night might come, or that he were adequately hidden in the mountain fastnesses, safe from a pursuit and capture.

His horse was a noble animal, and every minute bore him further away from his enemies, and if Feodor had thought only of the present he would have been greatly pleased at the contemplation of this fact.

The future was before him, however, and he dared not hope

for long until he was a mile off, and still could hear the voices of his pursuers, he knew that the chase might last for days.

With a prayer for safety, therefore, he spurred on, faster and faster, not caring to run into the mountains and to meet from his bloodthirsty enemies.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FROM ONE HILL TO ANOTHER.

Night had fallen over the mountain, and Feodor, his horse snugly ensconced in a rocky nook hidden completely from sight, looked anxiously along the pass to detect any signs by which he might know that his dreaded enemies, the officers and police spies, were approaching.

He had food and a warm blanket in his knapsack, but no means of making a fire in such a place, and even if he had would not have dared to light one, for fear that its gleam might betray him to those in pursuit.

He ate a frugal meal, wrapped his blanket about him, and, sitting with his carbine across his knee, leaned against a great rock and listened for the slightest sound.

For an hour or more he sat thus, but at last, feeling secure from all intrusion, a sense of drowsiness gradually overcame him, and before he was aware he had fallen asleep.

He was awakened by hearing the sound of voices, and then he saw a gleam of light shining along the path, as though men with torches were approaching.

"He would not dare cross in the night," said a man, and Feodor recognized the voice as that of the officer he had locked down at the inn in Tomsk.

"Then he must be hiding somewhere. Would he stray from the pass?"

"He would not dare. Let us follow in this direction."

The men were approaching and might pass without seeing him, but, again, their torches might betray him, and this was to be feared most of all.

He edged away from the spot most cautiously, and would have escaped entirely, had not his horse, at his approach, given a gentle neigh of recognition.

"Mark!" cried one of the men. "There is a horse, and not one of ours. They are too far away. He is here."

"And here are footprints. Ah! we have him trapped at last."

In another moment Feodor, glancing out from behind a boulder, saw some half dozen men with torches in their hands and carbines slung over their shoulders approaching his retreat.

There seemed no way of escaping, and yet, rather than be caught like a fox in a trap, he resolved to face them boldly and fight for his life to the death, if need be.

"Gentlemen, I am here," he cried, loudly, coming out a pace. "What do you want with me?"

"You are Feodor Petroff, an enemy of the Czar," cried the leading officer. "You know well enough why we want you."

"I am Feodor Petroff, but I am no enemy to the Czar. I am the enemy only of cowards and villains."

"Surrender, or lose your base life. Come out before we kill you with bullets."

"You will have to take me first, as I told you before. I warn you, if you advance another step, that I will fire. Your blood will be upon your own heads if you do not heed the warning."

"We are six to one!" cried the officer. "Upon him!"

They sprang forward, expecting to take the boy by surprise, but found, instead, that he was ready for them.

A shot rang out from behind the rocks, and one of the pursuers fell dead, his torch falling into the snow and going out, as his life had done, upon the instant.

A volley answered the single shot, but the bullets only flattened the rocks against the rocks, doing no harm to the young fugitive.

"Again I tell you," he cried. "Advance at your peril!"

"Upon him!" yelled the officer. "He must not escape."

Again the pursuers forced, and this time they reached the rocks behind which he had been sheltered, but again the sharp, quick report rang out, and again a scream of agony and a heavy fall told that the boy's arm had been fatal.

Like they could rush upon him and drive him from his new

nest a third shot was heard, and then the ringing of steel on steel was upon the rocky road.

"He has escaped! To horse and after him!"

Feodor dashed down the pass at break-neck speed, but presently, hearing no sound of pursuit, drew rein and proceeded at a less dangerous pace, not caring to risk his life by a plunge over a precipice, or having his horse stumble on a loose stone and throw him headlong.

The night was dark, and he knew not where he was going; the only thing he could do was to give the animal a loose rein and let him pick his own way down the mountain.

At the end of an hour he passed a feeling of great danger over him, and, dismounting, left the horse standing in the road.

Crawling along cautiously, putting his hands before him, the boy soon came to a spot where the road ceased altogether.

He was on the verge of a precipice.

A few steps more and he would have been hurled over the brink to perish in the frightful depths below.

Making his way backward to where he had left his horse, for he dared not turn, lest he should go astray and fall over the edge, Feodor soon reached the animal's side, got upon his back, edged him away a few paces, and then determined to wait until daylight before proceeding.

Morning dawned at length, and he saw that, although on the brink of a precipice, his road wound along it, and that he might proceed with caution for some distance.

He followed this dangerous path, winding in and out along the very verge, the cliffs stretching high over his head until he at length reached a point where the road was safer.

He reined mounted, ate his breakfast, looked to his weapons and then kept on his way.

By noon he had reached a second precipice, and here there was another pass, down which, at that very instant, there came hurrying half a dozen horsemen, the remainder of the party that had attacked him the night before, with reinforcements.

They shouted and fired a volley at him, his horse, frightened at the sudden sound, rushing wildly forward.

A few paces away a stunted tree grew out of the rocky ledge, throwing its branches right across his path.

As he neared this his horse stumbled, and, fearing that he could not clear it, he threw himself out of the saddle and grasped the rough, horny branches in a firm clasp.

The horse dashed forward, struck his fore foot upon a loose stone, fell on his knees, and then, as he essayed to rise, was hit by a shot from those behind, and with a shrill cry, rolled over the precipice.

Down into the awful depths he went thundering, carrying a mass of stones, snow and frozen earth with him and disappearing far below, a mangled mass of quivering flesh.

Feodor dropped upon the hard ground, fired a shot at his enemies, and then fled along the pass at full speed.

The shot took effect and a horse and rider dashed over the precipice, and then, waiting to see no more, the brave boy dashed on and was soon out of sight.

To his great delight, he presently reached the plain, and hurried on until night overtook him, when he hid in a little wood, where he made a fire, dug a hole in the snow, and, wrapping himself in his blanket, slept soundly until morning.

He then continued on his way, and traveled rapidly, hoping to distance his pursuers should they still be upon his track.

It was nearly night, and he had paused for a few moments at the edge of a wood, where he saw the very men he most feared, approaching around a wooded knoll.

He sprang forward, but they seemed to be gaining on him, and the fear of death was in his soul.

He ran swiftly over the snow, and presently, to his delight, saw a little hut in the wilderness, the smoke issuing from a rude stone chimney, the whole speaking to him of shelter and protection from his enemies.

He knew not why, but he felt that here he should find friends, and he sped on over the ice and snow, renewed hope animating him.

He cried loudly for help, and suddenly he beheld an old man come out of the hut, take a defiant attitude, and point a carbine at him.

He rushed on, fell at the old man's feet, and now, seeing that there were others at hand, cried excitedly:

"Save me, father, save me!"

He heard confused exclamations, the old man suddenly clasped him to his heart in a firm embrace, and then he was

dragged within the hut, and the door was closed and barred.

"Oh, my son," cried the old man, "what joy is this to be united after all our trials!"

Feodor looked up, and then saw for the first time that the man whom he had called father in his terror was his father indeed—Nicholas Petroff.

He looked around him in a dazed manner, and his face suddenly flushed with wild excitement.

Surely that young girl near him could not be his sister.

Yes, it was she indeed; there could be no doubt of it, and brother and sister embraced and shed tears of joy at their unexpected meeting. Grodjinsky was there also.

A sudden sound from outside recalled Feodor to himself, however, and he sprang to the aid of his father, saying, bravely:

"The danger is not yet over. I am myself again, father, and will throw aside all tender feelings until these hounds without are beaten back."

## CHAPTER IX.

### FEODOR'S DISCOVERY.

"They are coming!" whispered Petroff. "Now, then, to receive them."

He thrust the muzzle of his carbine through a loop-hole in the door as he spoke and fired.

Grodjinsky did the same, and Feodor, finding a loop-hole in the wall at one side, quickly loaded his piece and fired. The chief officer dropped to the ground.

The shots were returned, and the enemy made a break for the door and tried to force it. Then Grodjinsky, firing from an angle in the wall, where he could cover the entrance, quickly dislodged the adventurous officers from their coveted position.

There were more than enough weapons for all, and Carlotta loaded them as fast as they were discharged, so that a number of shots could be fired in quick succession.

Night had now fallen, and Grodjinsky lighted a lamp and placed it upon a rude table, while Carlotta proceeded to prepare the supper.

"Have they gone?" asked Feodor.

"Yes," said Petroff, simply, "but there are enemies worse than ourselves abroad, and if they escape us they shall not escape them."

"What do you mean?"

Petroff said nothing for some minutes, but at last raised his hand to enforce silence.

A long-drawn howl was heard, followed by a bark, and then a succession of fierce cries, gradually coming nearer.

"The wolves!" cried Feodor in horror.

"Yes; a night like this drives them forth to seek their victims."

"My heavens! and I was in the forest last night alone."

"Heaven watches over His own," murmured Petroff devoutly, and then nothing more was said for some minutes.

There was no further danger to be feared from the fierce pursuers who had pressed Feodor so closely, and now the reunited family had much to talk about and the supper was prepared and eaten and the night well advanced before Feodor had told his story and heard what had befallen his father and sister since their last meeting.

Then Feodor learned that Laszinski, foiled in his attempts to win Carlotta, after having abducted her, had caused her to be banished to Siberia as a plotter against the government, caring not if she died a miserable death, so long as he could not possess her himself.

"He sought my life, my wealth, all that is dear to me," muttered Petroff, "and he has succeeded in banishing me from my beloved home, in causing the death of my loving wife. Let him beware, for one day divine justice will overtake him."

During the night the cries of the wolves were heard, and more than once a snarling, angry pack would dash against the door and the walls of the hut, being quickly sent to flight, however, by a shot from one of the men, when they would stay away for some little time.

"It is the smell of blood that attracts them," observed Grodjinsky, quietly, after one of these occasions. "They do not usually come so near."

"The dead officers!" cried Feodor, turning suddenly pale. "The wolves have eaten them!"

"Ay, and any live ones that may be abroad. The Siberian wolf has proved a valuable ally to us to-night, and a terrible one," and the Nihilist laughed in a way that fairly made Feodor's blood run cold.

"Then none will escape?" he whispered.

"No, and our secret is safe."

"But some day the hut may be discovered and you will be known as escaped prisoners?"

"Yes, the brand of Siberia is too deeply marked ever to be effaced. However, there is no chance to unwelcome visitors coming here," and again the man laughed in that terrible fashion of his.

"But I discovered it, and so may others."

"Discovery is one thing; entrance another. You were welcome, they were not."

"Then you mean that you are prepared to—" and Feodor paused.

"To shoot down all who attempt to enter unless they are friends to us or our holy cause."

The man spoke firmly, and there was no reason to doubt that if their retreat were discovered it would be defended at the cost of the invaders' lives.

At last, at a late hour, all retired for the night, but it was a long time before Feodor could obtain sleep in his excited state, and when he awoke the others had been up some hours and Grodjinsky was absent.

Outside a few scattered bones and remnants of clothing and the trace of numerous small, peculiar footprints were all that gave evidence of the dreadful struggle of the night before, and even these were being rapidly effaced by the drifting snow.

In the course of the next few days Feodor learned of the plans which his father and Grodjinsky had formed for the future, and entered heartily into them.

They were to watch for bands of exiles passing through the neighborhood, and, when possible, aid the poor creatures to escape, or succor such as had done so and were without the means of sustaining life during a protracted journey through these barren wastes.

"That will I do," cried Feodor, eagerly. "I can even go to the distant towns without being suspected, learn of the parties who are expected, and give aid to one and another without being known. I would track the desolate steppes from one end to another to save innocent men from suffering what men have suffered because of the tyrant and those who surround him."

"A good plan," muttered Grodjinsky. "The boy is not marked with the cursed brand that we are doomed to carry for the rest of our days, and, with care, he can come and go entirely unsuspected. Petroff, the boy is a true son of yours, it can easily be seen."

"Yes, and I will do more," cried Feodor. "I will obtain my father's pardon and expose this villainous Laszinski. It was through him that my father suffered for a crime he never committed. The Czar could not have known, or he would never have permitted such an injustice to be done."

"Two of the prisoners swore that I was with them," said Petroff.

"They were not Nihilists, or they would never have done so," muttered Grodjinsky. "A man faithful to our cause never betrays his friends."

"They were spies, sworn to swear falsely," cried Carlotta. "They were men sent to the prison by Laszinski himself to carry out the vile plot. I overheard him boasting of its afterward, when confined in his house."

"The villain!" murmured Feodor. "He and I have a long account to settle, and he shall be paid, with usury, for all the evil he has done."

The house was large enough to accommodate the four friends, but if others came more room would be needed, and the work of adding to it was now begun, wood being obtained from the stunted forest and stones from the river a mile or so away.

There were axes and a few other tools, and by dint of hard work an extra wing was built upon the house, and when it was secure in all its parts, being plastered outside with mud, the walls lined inside with moss and a stout floor laid, a door was cut through the wall of the house proper, so that connection could be had with it and the wing, obviating the necessity of going out of doors, as had to be done before the wing was completed.

An underground passage was then made, leading from the main hut to the wood, being wide enough for two persons to

walk side by side and high enough to walk in, the walls being thick and solid, so as to exclude the noise produced by a ceiling of dried out trees, which were joined together and held in place by the cement of the side walls.

These operations occupied some time, and when they were finished the short Siberian summer had begun, and the landscape was a trifle less cheerless, although it was desolate enough, in all conscience, at any time.

Though not much more than a hundred miles from any town of importance, they might have been a thousand for all the life that they saw, for in Siberia the towns are far apart and the intervening country thinly settled, if not at all, so that where there were vessels of any size to be found miles of desert lay on all sides.

When the summer was nearly passed Feodor decided to go to Tomsk, following the course of the river, instead of taking the way over the mountain as before, and when in the town learned, if possible, what he could of all that the world he had left.

The journey occupied the better part of five days, but was accomplished without danger, the boy reaching the city in the early afternoon of the fifth day from the start.

There were many strangers in town, and he was, therefore, not noticed among them, and was free to go and come as he chose, being supplied with money by Great sky, though where the latter obtained it he could not tell for the life of him, nor did he ask to pay his necessary expenses.

On the second day after his arrival a party of prisoners, destined for the mines, came into the place. Feodor being present when they arrived, and scanning the faces of all in most anxiously to see if there were any known to him.

"Some prisoners escaped from the last lot that went through here, is it not so?" he heard one man say to another, as he was watching the sad procession.

"Ay, but what good is it to them? They will die in the desert. They dare not enter the towns. The chain-breaks will betray them."

"Ah, see, here come the police; there is 't at dog, Ivanoff, the cur who bites the hand that feeds him."

"Ivanoff! That is Laszinski's friend and ally," thought Feodor. "I must keep an eye on him, and I may, perhaps, learn something."

The boy tracked the police spy to an inn, where he had himself secured accommodation, and which, being quiet and rather obscure, was the very place of all where a spy would be apt to pass unnoticed.

That evening another traveler arrived, a peddler, with a pack and a long beard and a hook nose, and Feodor would have passed him by without notice had he not seen him cast a sudden glance of intelligence at Ivanoff, who was seated in the general room of the inn smoking a short wooden pipe and drinking tea.

Feodor left the room, but paused just outside the door to listen, feeling sure that he would hear something, but never once expecting the disclosure that followed.

"What o'clock is it, my friend?" he heard the peddler ask.—"Time for action?"

He heard Ivanoff give utterance to a startled exclamation, rise from his chair and cry in a hoarse whisper:

"What! Is it thou, Peter Laszin—"

"Sh! not that name! I am Lazarus, the Jew peddler."

But Feodor had heard enough to convince him that Peter Laszinski, his old enemy, was under the same roof with him, and that his coming boded no good.

"A precious pair of scoundrels!" he muttered, "and one that needs watching. I'll watch!"

## CHAPTER X.

### A WICKED PLOT DISCOVERED.

"Are you a fool?" hissed Laszinski. "Don't you know that that name would raise the very fiend if spoken here?"

"Yes, but the surprise at hearing the password spoken so unexpectedly gave me a start, and I spoke before—"

"Before you thought? Yes, but it does not do to do that. One must always think before he speaks, and then he will have less to regret."

"There was no one within hearing. The boy had gone out."

"What boy?" asked Laszinski, eagerly.

"Only a young Mujik (peasant) who was in here. Those cattle understand nothing."

"Ah!" and the villain gave a grunt of satisfaction, and then added, "I never told by the sound that the two scoundrels had seated themselves at a table."

"I have much to say to you," said the spy, "but this room is too public. We might be interrupted at any moment, overheard, or perhaps even spied upon."

"Ah! you are distrustful."

"Yes, that is what makes me a good agent of the government. I would distrust even you, Ivanoff, if I had cause."

"Where can we go? I have a room above."

"I will go there, but not alone with you, for we must make sure that we're known to have anything in common. Can't I show you some extra fine bear's grease for the hair, my friend, or some double distilled attar of rose for the kerchief? Maybe a gold ring or chain would suit your purpose?"

It had not been known that the spy was in the disguise of a Jew peddler; he would now have supposed that, some one else was speaking, so sudden was the change in tone, inflection and accent, the deception being most perfect.

Wondering what had caused this sudden change, he peered cautiously through the narrow space between the open door and its frame, and that Laszinski had opened his pack and spread out upon the table a tempting array of colored handkerchiefs, stripes of blue, yellow, green, boxes of imitation gold chains, and numerous other things likely to attract purchasers.

Hearing footsteps approaching along the passage, Feodor re-entered the boudoir-room followed by others, and gazed interestedly upon the contents of the peddler's pack, like the simple-minded peasant lad he was supposed to be.

He was vexed that the two plotters had not had time to make an appointment before the arrival of the landlord, but resolved to keep a careful watch, and, if the interview were to take place, to be within hearing.

As the night wore on the people in the room gradually grew smaller in numbers until nine o'clock came, and then Ivanoff went up to bed, saying to the inn-keeper:

"Call me at seven—at seven, mind. You will remember? Number seven, at seven o'clock."

"Why, to be sure, that is easy to remember, your excellency. I'll remember the two sevens."

"Seven is the number of his room," thought Feodor. "Good! Mine is eight. Can anything have been better?"

The peddler having sold enough of his stock to pay for his night's accommodation, and seeing no chance for further trade, closed his pack, gave it to the host to take care of, lighted a pipe, drew his chair up to the fire, and indulged in a comfortable smoke.

One by one the people thinned out, and finally, fearing that Laszinski might suspect him, Feodor went up to his room, noticing that there was a light burning in the next one as he passed it.

He partly undressed and got into bed, putting out his light, but not going to sleep.

He waited until the clock struck ten, when he heard some one come upstairs, pass along the hall and enter a room at the other end.

After this all was quiet, and he wondered if the spy would not seek Ivanoff, being anxious that the latter should do so soon for fear lest he himself might fall asleep.

Eleven o'clock struck, and then twelve, and Feodor was beginning to feel very drowsy, when he presently heard a soft footstep in the hall outside, and then a gentle tap upon the door next to his.

This was repeated twice, and then the door opened very gently and some one went into the room.

"What have you to say to me?" he heard Ivanoff ask, directly.

"Much," replied a voice, which he knew to be Laszinski's. "I am after that fortune."

"Whose?"

"Petroff's. All my plans have failed if I lose that. He must have secreted his money somewhere, for I could get hold of nothing. My share of what the government confiscated would not buy salt for my bread. The bulk of his fortune remains somewhere, and I must know where it is."

"You will seek Petroff? Don't you know that he has escaped?"

"Yes, but he must be somewhere in the mountains, or on the plains. What we want to do is to find him, assure him that he is pardoned, and start him back to St. Petersburg."

"And rob him when he goes to look for his hidden treasure?"

"No, but force the secret from him. He will not suspect you, and you can approach him; I will help you later in the game."

"You are certain that he has hidden his wealth?"

"Yes."

"Suppose we should not find him?"

"We must."

"The boy is missing also?"

"Yes, and if we find him we can trace the father. That treasure must be mine. I plotted for it and I must have it."

"And I am anxious to have a share of it. I will help you, and I want your help, too. In the latest batch of prisoners, who came in to-day, there is a young girl, beautiful as a fairy. She must be mine!"

"Aha! You want me to procure her release on some pretext, and then deliver her to you, to use my influence for her pardon, as you might say?"

"That's it," and Ivanoff chuckled.

"Her name?"

"Paulina Letchikoff. She is accused of being engaged in plots against the Czar. That can be easily disposed of. I had a purpose in getting her away from the city."

"You wish the gentle Paulina for a wife?" and Laszinski laughed.

"That is it. You will help me?"

"Surely."

"Oh, the heartless villains," thought Feodor. "Are such things possible? They shall not ensnare this poor girl, if I can prevent it."

The two plotters talked for some time longer, and Feodor heard many things which astonished him and saw how hard it was to obtain justice while such wretches as these were the confidential agents of the government and shared the favor of the emperor.

At a late hour Laszinski crept back to his own room and Feodor fell asleep, resolving to thwart the villains' plans in every way possible.

The next morning he was up early, and during the forenoon kept a watch on the movements of the two spies, determining to thwart their vile plans.

He saw Laszinski send a messenger with a note, and following the boy for some distance, saw that he was bound to the ostrog, or prison pen, and then hastily returned to the inn.

An hour or so later, as he was sitting, evidently asleep, at a table in one corner of the room, the spy's messenger returned and handed him a packet.

Laszinski glanced around the room, upset a chair, rolled a stone mug across the floor and made a considerable noise, evidently for the purpose of seeing how sound the boy in the corner could sleep.

Feodor only snored the louder, and the spy dismissed the messenger with a few words and then opened the packet.

"Ha! girl will be delivered on pretense of being taken to her friends; two hundred rubles will satisfy all qualms of conscience; fifty more to obtain silence of guards. H'm! that's good!" the villain muttered in broken sentences. "I'll make Ivanoff pay five hundred. I must at least have as much as the rest."

"The villain must fleece his friend, or he wouldn't be the scoundrel he is," thought Feodor. "Oh, what wretches there are in this world!"

"Will be ready at dusk," continued the spy, "so as not to attract attention. Better bring a light carriage with drawn blinds. Will be given up on receipt of money. H'm! a cash proceeding that. Well, I think I can arrange that, and, by the saints, if I find her beautiful I might take her for myself. But no, I need Ivanoff, and so won't play him false this time."

Here the spy made such a racket that Feodor could feign sleep no longer, and so, raising his head, rubbing his eyes sleepily, yawning and stretching his arms, he looked stupidly around and said, in a thick voice:

"Did you speak to me, excellency?"

Laszinski looked at the boy, laughed, and said, bluntly:

"Go up to room seven, above, and tell the gentleman that I want to speak to him. Tell him I will sell him the chains we spoke of for five hundred rubles."

"Yes, excellency," and Feodor shambled off like the heavy-footed lout he was supposed to be, sought the room of the spy, pounded on the door, and was bade to enter in no pleasant tones.

He found Ivanoff sitting up in bed, half-dressed, and smoking a pipe, and in response to the man's demand to know what he wanted, answered:

"The Jew peddler, sir, says you can have what you were talking about for five hundred rubles."

"As cheap as that?" muttered the spy. "Bid the peddler dog bring his pack up here. It is not for a gentleman to wait upon him; let him come to me."

Feodor delivered the message, and Laszinski proceeded to his fellow conspirator's room, where the two discussed their plans, every word of which was heard by the boy on the other side of the thin partition.

"The villains!" he muttered. "I can do but little here, but this I can do, and that your girl shall never fall into the clutches of these wretches, if I have to kill them both!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### A BRAVE RESCUE.

"Here, pig, do you want to earn a hatful of kopecks?"

These surly words were addressed to Feodor, who sat sleepily gazing into the fire that evening, before the lamps were lighted by Ivanoff, who came in from outside, snapping a whip and stamping his feet to get rid of the dust.

"Yes, excellency, I would do anything for a hatful of kopecks. I was to wait at the inn till my new master came to take me away, but he comes not and my money is going. I will do anything for money."

"You must drive myself and this gentleman to a certain place and bring us back. Can you understand that?"

"Yes, your excellency. Is this the other gentleman?" indicating a man who had just entered.

This was a man of middle age, wearing a long, full, black cloak, and stout and heavily bearded, and for a moment Feodor was puzzled to make out who he was, until he turned to Ivanoff and said in French, a language much used by the higher classes in Russia:

"Tell him to go to the ostrog and leave me. The girl will be put in the carriage, muffled up, as I am, and then he will drive to the other address, you keeping him in sight."

"That will do, and then neither he nor any other will suspect," replied Ivanoff in the same language.

Now it was not to be supposed that a simple Mujik would understand French, but Feodor had been well brought up and he had had a good education, so that he understood the polite language of Russia nearly as well as he did his own.

He laughed to himself to think how he had deceived the two villains and then accosted them to the door, got upon the seat of the carriage and drove off to the ostrog, where both men alighted.

"I will presently return," said Laszinski, "and you will drive me to the secret of the empress, the fifth house on the right. You understand?"

"Yes, excellency. Then will I have the hatful of kopecks?"

"Yes, you shall have them then."

Both men entered the gloomy building, and Feodor, tearing a blank leaf from a little prayer-book he always carried, hastily wrote upon it these words:

"You were to have been abducted by two wicked men, but I will save you. Trust in me and all will be well. Above all, make no outcry.—Feodor Petroff."

This note he crumpled up in his hand and threw upon the carriage seat, and in a few moments a muffled figure appeared and advanced toward the carriage.

"You must go alone or you may be detected," said Ivanoff, in French, the spy having quickly followed. "The boy can be trusted, for he is too stupid to know anything."

"You will take me to my friend?" asked an unmistakable female voice.

"Yes, yes; but do not speak. I will follow at a safe distance. Do not drive fast," he added to Feodor, as the muffled figure entered the carriage and the door was closed.

"Yes, excellency," said Feodor, drove away at a moderate pace.

The instant he had turned the corner of the next street, however, he dashed away like the wind.

The spy yelled to him not to go so fast, but Feodor heeded him not, and, as they passed a street-lamp, he turned and

saw a pale face looking appealingly to him from one of the carriage windows.

Up one street and down another the carriage rattled, keeping up such a terrible pace that no one could hope to keep up with it on foot.

Presently they left the town, and after they had gone a few miles Feodor stopped the horses, jumped down and caught the trembling girl in his arms.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"Your friend. I have saved you from a dreadful fate."

Feodor then briefly related the outline of the plot, telling what he knew of the two villains, and then added:

"Have you friends to whom I could take you?"

"Alas, no. The only friends I have are in the train that went out to-night for the mines."

"Relatives?"

"No, those are in St. Petersburg, and that is too far for me to even hope to return."

"Then I will be your friend, if you will let me, if you can trust me."

"Your face is good and noble, I will trust you," she said simply.

"We have far to go before we reach my father," said Feodor, "and I must obtain provisions. Will you wait here until I return? I will take one of the horses."

Paulina consented, and Feodor unhitched one of the horses and rode off at full speed to the town, where he obtained what he wanted, and, loading his parcels upon the horse's back, hurried to the inn, ran lightly up to his room, uncased his pistols and knapsack and came down.

As he was passing out, however, he came face to face with Laszinski.

"Now, then, stupid, what have you done with the girl?" demanded the spy, angrily.

"Not so stupid as you think, Peter Laszinski. The girl is safe, and he who finds her must first catch me."

"Feodor Petroff!" gasped the spy.

"Ay, and your foe to the death. Stand aside!"

Laszinski had attempted to stop him, but Feodor seized him by the shoulders, spun him around, and sent him whirling through the open door of the general room, and reeling almost into the fire.

Quick as a flash the young man sprang to the door, dashed outside, leaped upon his horse, and was away in an instant.

The spy gave the alarm, and he and Ivanoff quickly followed, rousing the mounted guard and speeding after the runaway in an incredibly short time.

Nevertheless, Feodor succeeded in getting to Paulina's place of refuge ahead of the pursuers and bade her mount her horse. Then they speeded away. In two days time they reached the hut of Feodor's relatives, where they were received with open arms.

Thus three years were passed in their safe refuge without being disturbed by their enemies.

Then Feodor set out, determined to seek the Czar's intercession for his relatives. But while on the way he learned of the death of the Czar, and that Alexander III was now in power. This did not turn him from his purpose, however.

One night, while stopping at an inn, a fine-looking stranger entered and asked for lodging for the night. He was accommodated.

The innkeeper and his wife were a treacherous looking pair, and Feodor overheard them talking of doing up the stranger for the money which he carried.

Feodor immediately communicated his news to the stranger, whose name was Dimitri, and they set a trap for the innkeeper and his wife and caught them as they were stealing into the stranger's room.

Dimitri now became Feodor's friend, and the boy told him his name and his troubles. Dimitri promised to aid him. He told him he was on his way to the Czar with government papers and told Feodor to accompany him.

Dimitri also communicated the joyful news to Feodor that he was the grand duke—the Czar's brother.

When near St. Petersburg the stranger told Feodor to proceed to the city alone, as he had some business to attend to, but that he would look out for him as soon as the business was attended to.

Feodor started alone, and shortly entered an inn for some refreshment. While there who should enter but Laszinski and Ivanoff.

After a while the two had a fierce quarrel, and shortly after a fall and groan were heard and a hurried departure. When

Feodor entered the next stall, there lay Laszinski on the floor dead.

## CHAPTER XII.

### STARTLING RENCONTRE.

The imperial city resounded with mirth and gayety, as upon that fatal night when Nikolas Petroff, unjustly accused, was hurried off to prison.

Some great fete was going on, but, regardless of this, a young man, well-formed and handsome, advanced to the sentinel in charge, and was admitted.

Whatever he said must have been of importance, for he gained entrance at the various portals until he reached the grand saloon of the palace, where, passing rapidly along the side of the room, now being jostled by the dancers, now disturbing some little tete-a-tete, he finally reached the door of an inner apartment, before which stood two of the Czar's own bodyguard, clad in glittering uniform, and armed from head to foot.

To one of these he exhibited a seal ring and murmured a few words, when the man bowed respectfully, disappeared into the room beyond, and presently returned.

"The emperor will see you," he said, and Feodor Petroff, for it was he, entered the room, crossed it to another, and in a moment was alone in the presence of the newly-crowned emperor.

"Sire," said the young man, dropping upon one knee, "I crave attention for a few moments that justice may be done."

"You are the young peasant who rendered our brother a great service not long ago?" asked the emperor. "I have heard of your bravery. What do you wish?"

"I am no peasant, sire, but the son of a merchant of this city, unjustly banished."

"Unjustly! Know you not that no emperor can be unjust?"

"It was not the emperor's doing, the Czar never knew of the case. I have heard the confession of the chief scoundrel, and he acknowledges that the emperor was not informed upon the matter, else this great outrage would never have been done."

Feodor then gave an account of his father's arrest and imprisonment, of his own futile efforts to get at the ear of the Czar, of Laszinski's treachery, and of the life in Siberia, and lastly, the overhearing of the spy's confession and of his death.

The emperor pondered long and seriously, and finally said, gravely:

"A great wrong has been done by some one; be it my task to undo it. Your father is pardoned."

"You will give me the proof of it that I may go and bring him home?" cried the young man, in an ecstasy.

The emperor took a piece of parchment, wrote a few words, signed and sealed the document, struck a silver bell, and summoned an attendant, and delivered the parchment to him with a few words, bidding Feodor be patient until the man returned.

When he did so the pardon had been countersigned by several high officials, and was as binding as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

The emperor then inclosed the precious document in a heavy vellum envelope, and handed it to Feodor, saying:

"Young man, your bravery and fidelity have won you this. Guard it well, for if it is lost your father's liberty is lost with it."

Feodor kissed the emperor's hand, and withdrew, hastening from the palace as quickly as was possible.

Outside in the snowy street he thought that he was being followed, and he quickened his pace with the idea of throwing off pursuit; but at the end of half an hour, having made many turns and doubles, suddenly discovered a muffled figure within a few paces of him.

"Stand off!" he cried fiercely, drawing a dagger. "Who are you and what do you want?"

"Vengeance!" said the figure, and Feodor started back in surprise.

The voice was that of Laszinski, whom he believed to have been murdered in the inn at Moscow.

As he fell back the spy followed, and in a moment both were under a large lamp suspended over a gateway.

"I never feared you living, and I do not fear you dead!" cried Feodor, and springing forward, he dragged the cloak

from the face of God, and the weight of the light fell full upon it.

"Yes; you thought to escape me, but it was a foolish thought, for you are as much in my power as ever."

"I saw you, in the guise of a peddler, a favorite mark-making with you—struck down in a drinking booth in Moscow, and lying dead before my eyes. Speak! What mystery is this?"

"The peddler," laughed the figure. "True, it was a favorite disguise of mine once, but not then. The peddler was I cut off."

"Then you murdered him!" cried the boy. "He had heard your confession, and that sealed his doom."

"What do you say?" hissed the spy. "You were there?"

"Yes, and heard all. Stand off, or I will not answer for your life."

The spy had suddenly rushed at him, but Feodor was too quick for him, and plying his dagger in a manner that would prevail earlier to the blow if he advanced too close, the boy kept the villain at a safe distance as he retreated.

"So you heard all that was said!" hissed the spy again, trying to force through Feodor's guard, and receiving an ugly cut in the wrist.

"Ay, and to-night the Czar has heard all your miserable history. It is you who should take warning and fly from the city, not I, for by morning a price will be set upon your head."

"You have seen the emperor—you have obtained a pardon for your father?" said Laszinski, in a rage.

"Yes," answered Feodor, exultantly, forgetting all caution, "and the document is now in my possession."

"You shall never live to bear your message—he shall never live to receive it!" growled the angry villain, hurling himself upon the youth to annihilate him.

"Stand back. You have the mark of my anger now upon your cheek; you shall bear it elsewhere," and the brave boy, never thinking of summoning aid, threw himself upon the defensive, and quickly parried the murderous blow which Laszinski aimed at his heart.

The spy made a second thrust, but Feodor sprang in upon him and drew his knife twice across the villain's forehead, the hot blood running into his eyes and blinding him for the moment.

"There! I have marked you so that all men may know you," laughed Feodor, scornfully. "Your description shall be given to the police: 'Laszinski, perjurer and villain; scar on left cheek and two cuts across forehead. A thousand rubles reward for his head, ten thousand for the scoundrel alive.'

"Ha! Do you mock me?" yelled the baffled wretch. "Take that, and see if I am yet powerless to harm those whom I hate!"

He made a blind rush at the young man, but the latter sprang aside lightly and the villain measured his length in the snow.

"Good-night, Peter Laszinski, and a pleasant morning to you when the police hunt you down!" laughed young Petroff, and in a moment he was out of sight and speeding away in the darkness like a deer.

His life was too precious now to risk in an encounter with his bitter foe, and he must take no chances until the parchment declaring Nikolas Petroff free had been placed in his father's hands.

"Had I but looked more closely at the fallen body I would not have made the mistake I did," he thought, "and I could even then have followed the villain up. Now he will be forever in my path, to be shunned as I would avoid the plague."

He knew that Laszinski would leave the city as speedily as he might, in order to avoid arrest, and that he would also seek to follow his young enemy and wrest the pardon from him—kill him, too, if need be—and, indeed, in any case there was danger to be feared.

There was nothing to detain the youth in the city, and after paying his bill at the little inn where he had stopped, being unable to find any of his father's former friends, he went to the railroad station and bought a ticket to a point many leagues away, having to wait upward of an hour before the train would start.

Shortly before leaving he saw an official post a large placard upon the wall, and, going up to it, discovered that his words had been prophetic, and that a large reward was already offered for the apprehension of Peter Laszinski, formerly an employee in the service of the police, all persons

being required to give information and pay a heavy fine and imprisonment.

"Justice, though blind, is at last reaching out her hands for the miscreant," mused our hero. "All things come to him who waits, but often too late, and its reward too late. Let the villain follow me if he will; forewarned is forearmed."

At that moment the signal bell sounded, and the young man, taking his seat in the train, was speedily whisked away, and it was not until long after that he learned in carrying the tidings of his pardon to the poor exile far away among the Siberian wilds.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LASZINSKI'S RAGE.

Upon reaching the end of the line of railroad, Feodor, who had seen nothing of the spy, nor any one who might be in disguise, looked about him for some conveyance with which to continue his journey.

Had it been summer he might have taken a steamer down the Volga as far as Perm, but now everything was frozen, and he must get either a sledge or a heavy wagon, both of which he thought might be had upon presenting his papers.

There were hundreds of leagues to be traveled, but he had already come this distance when no ray of hope appeared before him, and now that he was bearing his freedom to the exile he could have journeyed to the shores of the Pacific upon such an errand without quailing.

There was an obstacle in the way of obtaining horses, however, which he had not foreseen, and to show what this was it will be necessary to follow the fortunes of Laszinski.

The latter, departing at once from St. Petersburg, before the proclamation offering a reward for his capture had been posted, made his way to Moscow and thence to a town some leagues further east which he reached in advance of Feodor.

He was not aware of the reward being offered, but he knew that to meet the young man now would be to subject himself to danger of arrest, as Feodor would prefer charges against him which could be easily substantiated by telegraphing back to St. Petersburg.

He intended to keep just ahead of the boy, but at Nishi-Novgorod he allowed the latter to get ahead of him, through having overslept in the inn where he stayed over night.

From descriptions furnished him by the owner of the post horses he knew that Feodor had gone on by a short branch road at the end of which he would have to take horses, his orders signed by the grand duke making it incumbent upon the several agents at the posts to furnish him with the means of conveyance upon demand.

When Laszinski found that the young man had departed, he at once telegraphed on to where Feodor would stop, to the manager of the posting station, as follows:

"Detain one Feodor Petroff, who has a forged order signed by the Czar, and take it from him. He is an escaped criminal."

This he signed with his own name, being known to the manager, with whom he had formerly had dealings.

"Once the power to obtain conveyances and horses is taken from him," he muttered, "the journey will be harder to go forward. Then I can get the papers from him, and after that I care not what becomes of him."

It was night when Feodor arrived at the station to which Laszinski had telegraphed, but he determined to push on to the next before resting.

"A tarantass and horses," he ordered, the vehicle in question being a large covered wagon, in which he could sleep without difficulty.

At the same time the youth exhibited the necessary documents signed by the grand duke.

"I have no vehicles of any sort," said the agent.

"Then give me a horse."

"I have none."

"Procure me one; meanwhile I will partake of some refreshment."

"The cocks are in bad, there is nothing prepared."

Upon his return, after having procured a peasant and procured food, Feodor found that no horses had been provided, the agent being sound asleep before the fire.

Waking the man up, our hero asked him why the horses had not been brought, receiving the surly answer:

"You must wait. I cannot lose any sleep and go to an expense for such as you."

"What do you mean? Did you not read the order. Do you want to see my passport?"

"That may be forged as well as the other."

"Forged!" cried Feodor, in great wrath.

"Ay, forged. I have had warning of you and you cannot deceive me."

"Who has warned you?"

"The police."

"Let me see your letters."

"Oh, no. It is sufficient for you to know that I have them. The Czar's signature is enough, when genuine, but when forged it is void."

"The Czar's signature! Are you blind, fellow? This is the signature of the younger brother of the emperor, the grand duke Alexis," and Feodor spread the document out before the eyes of the astonished agent.

"Why, so it is."

"Yes, and more than that, do you recognize this?" and Feodor took from an inside pocket the ring given him by the grand duke, "and here is my passport signed by the Czar himself. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"Then procure me horses and a conveyance of some kind at once. Why have you not done so before?"

"It was a mistake," muttered the other, and without waiting to answer any more questions, the man hurried from the house.

In an hour one of the servants came in and informed Feodor that the horses were being made ready, but it was nearly another hour before he returned and said that the journey might now be undertaken.

The agent was not seen again, and Feodor, giving his guide the proper directions, stretched himself out upon a bundle of straw in the tarantass, covered himself with a coarse blanket and soon fell asleep.

Scarcely an hour after his departure, it being then nearly daybreak, a man rode up to the post-house, roused the keeper, and said eagerly:

"Well, Prossky, have you secured the young vagabond?"

"Ah, is it you, Laszinski? What young vagabond do you mean?"

"Young Petroff!"

"He departed an hour since."

"A thousand imps! Did you not receive my message, then?"

"Yes; but you said his orders were signed by the emperor. They were not, but were signed by the grand duke, and, furthermore, he exhibited the grand ducal signet, and I had nothing to do but obey."

"Fool! pig! idiot!" roared the spy, who saw that he and not Prossky had been outwitted, but willing enough to throw the blame on the latter, "you have allowed the rascal to escape. You shall pay dearly for this. Get me a swift horse at once."

"Petroff has taken the last I had. There will be others in at sunset to-night."

"Procure me one elsewhere, then."

"None are to be had in the station."

"I will not believe it. Refuse me at your peril!"

"Have you the emperor's orders?"

"Fool! You know me well enough not to require such a paper."

"But have you it?"

"No."

"Then you must proceed on foot. I could not give you a horse if I had a score."

The spy was in a rage, but as that made no impression upon the station keeper, he ran out, jumped upon the horse which had brought him to the place, and dashed off upon the road as dry as breaking.

The animal was already fagged out, and refused to go faster than at an ordinary gait, the consequence being that the spy did not reach the next station until noon, finding that young Petroff had preceded him by two hours.

"I'll stop the young villain yet," he muttered, as he walked toward the little telegraph station, intending to delay Feodor for sure this time.

"Wires blown down between here and the next post sta-

tion," said the operator, in response to the spy's demand. "Repairs cannot be made till to-morrow."

"And by that time he will be out of the province," thought the baffled villain. "By the fiends, I will get those papers if I have to follow him to the Urals!"

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE STRUGGLE AMID THE ICE.

Two days later found our hero well advanced upon his journey, and, arriving at a large station just at nightfall, he resolved to wait until morning before proceeding, giving orders to have a sledge and horses read immediately after breakfast.

The keeper bowed, but said nothing, and, having supped and warmed himself at the fire, our hero went to bed, sleeping until late the next day on account of his orders to awake him having been neglected.

He obtained a breakfast with difficulty, and then asked for the sledge and horses, being met with the invariable excuse that none were available.

"I ordered them last night," he protested.

"Yes, but I have had orders since which countermand yours."

"That is impossible."

"No, it is quite possible. You must know the reason."

"I do not," and after a long parley Feodor drew from the manager the information that he had been warned by the police against a person answering to his description.

"The police!" cried Feodor. "Then the instructions are signed? I demand to see them."

"You cannot do that until an officer arrives. Meanwhile, you are under arrest. I will trouble you for your papers."

"You shall not have them," and the young man drew his dagger, buttoned his coat to the chin, and threw himself in an attitude of defense.

The man was much stronger and heavier than he, and in a struggle would doubtless have overpowered his younger antagonist.

Just as matters were about to come to a crisis, however, the telegraph operator from the little office near by entered the room and posted a notice upon a board used for that purpose.

"Another police spy suspended," he said, with a chuckle. "The new emperor attends more closely to the character of his servants than did his father. Peter Laszinski is the latest one to fall. I know the fellow, and never liked him."

"Laszinski!" cried the agent. "Why, he is the one who has signed—" and then he paused.

"Do your instructions bear the name of Laszinski?" asked Feodor, guessing what the other would have said.

The man made no answer, but the youth knew from his looks, that he had guessed the truth.

"You are forbidden, harboring or having anything to do with this fellow," he cried. "I saw the placard before I left St. Petersburg. All instructions from him are as nothing. He is a proclaimed criminal. Are there any troops stationed at this place?"

"No; they have gone on toward the frontier."

"If there had been I would have remained and have seen this fellow put under arrest. Operator, I wish to send a message."

"Very well, sir; the charge is two kopecks a word to all points this side the border."

"Stop. When did this notice arrive?"

"But now, by telegraph. I have just copied it. The original will arrive by special messenger."

"And when did Laszinski's message come?"

"Three hours since."

"Then he is now on his way hither. If he comes," to the manager, "tell him I have gone and permit him to go on. I will see that he is stopped at the next post. It is he, then, that has been trying to detail me all along. Ah, this is a game that two can play at, and it is now my move."

Then, summoning the operator, our hero went with him to the little box of an office over which he presided, and dispatched the following message to the nearest point where the imperial troops were stationed:

"Should one Peter Laszinski, formerly of the Russian military police, but now proscribed, present himself at this or-

any other station, as he probably will do soon, know, all men, that a reward of five thousand rubles is offered for his apprehension, dead or alive. He will be known by a scar on the left cheek, and two cuts on the forehead. All persons being forbidden harboring or befriending him under pain of imprisonment.

By Order."

"There, that will prevent this villain from further annoying me, I think," muttered the plucky fellow, and then he returned to the post-office and found the sledge waiting for him.

"It was lucky that the notification arrived when it did," he thought, as he drove away, "and as it stands I have lost three good hours."

It will not be necessary to follow our hero through every stage of his journey; suffice it to say that in the course of a few days he arrived at Kazan, the capital of the province of that name, and here, in order to save time, he drove his sledge upon the frozen Volgo, which afforded a far better thoroughfare than the highroad even.

The driver cracked his whip, the bells jingled merrily, and on and on over the icy path scampered the blooded steeds, as if conscious that much depended upon their efforts.

The keen wind brought the blood to Feodor's cheeks, but he thought nothing of the cold, and would have braved more than that to accomplish the one great object he had in view.

Both he and the driver were well wrapped up in furs and woolens, and the keenness of the air was, therefore, of little moment to them, though there was danger to be feared from it under other circumstances.

What these might be will presently appear.

They had rounded a slight bend in the river when there came a sudden sharp crack, at which the horses pricked up their ears and began to grow restive.

Another and still another similar noise sounded, and then Feodor imagined that he felt a tremor beneath him as they swept swiftly on.

"What is the matter?" he asked the guide, a sudden terror taking possession of him.

"Oh, nothing," was the careless reply, "only sometimes, in severe weather, the ice cracks and throw itself—"

There came a louder report than before, and Feodor, looking behind him, saw the ice suddenly rise up, break in two, and the dark waters thrust several huge cakes upon their edges, where they quickly met other masses, against which they ground and chafed till it seemed as if all would be reduced to powder.

"Faster, faster!" he shouted. "The ice is breaking up! To the shore, as you value life!"

The horses felt the danger and needed not to be guided from it, for, with a quick snort, they dashed toward the left bank of the river, that being nearer than the right, and easier of ascent.

"Faster yet!" cried Feodor, as he saw the ice in front of him suddenly curve upward.

Then several jets of greenish water spurted upward, and then came another crash right under the feet of the frightened horses.

In front of them, too, the ice was beginning to break loose and rush down to join the shattered masses below.

"Faster!" screamed Feodor, and, springing forward, he seized the whip from the grasp of the now thoroughly terrified guide, and lashed the plunging animals most unmercifully, urging them on the while with all the strength of his voice.

Where they had just passed, the ice rose in a great curve and then suddenly split in the direction of the current, lateral breaks extending on both sides for some distance.

The shore ice now suddenly loosened with a terrible roar, and amid dashing spray, crashing masses of ice and huge, greenish cakes piled up edge to edge, Feodor urged the animals forward.

The sledge tossed and tumbled about, creaking and groaning at every bound, the harness stretched beyond its strength, suddenly parted, and the freed horses, leaping forward with terrified snorts, strove madly to reach the bank.

The guide was thrown forward over the ground and hurled up in the crumbling ice, Feodor at the same time falling backwards into the foliage, which was suddenly caught between two cakes of ice and rent asunder.

The young man cleared himself from the debris and leaped out upon the ice, making his way on all fours over the rough and surging masses toward the shore.

At one time the ice would be heaped up in front to such a

height as to shut out the view of the bank, and at another, leaping from mass to mass, seeking an all-slippery, irregular wall of ice would be thrown up, so high that it could see for a great distance.

One of the horses had disappeared, but the other was seen swimming the turbulent current, leaping over the icy waves nobly, and making his way steadily toward the shore.

Nothing remained of the sledge or load, and now, where it had been broken apart, was a stretch of rushing waters, dotted here and there with bobbing and tossing ice-cakes, or flecked with foam and dashing the spray high in air.

Our hero struggled manfully amid the surging masses, now caught in a fast embrace, clutched and torn by the moment ceasing in its forward movement.

The current would soon break the gorge, however, and meanwhile no time was to be lost.

Crawling, running, leaping, climbing, his hands torn and bleeding, his cloak in tatters, and his hat off, Feodor clung on, hardly daring to hope, and yet making every effort possible to save himself.

He looked around and saw that one horse had just clambered up the bank, but neither the driver nor the guide could be seen.

An ominous crash sounded, and the youth, fearing the worst, leaped from mass to mass, clutched a wild stretch of water as the ice-lock was broken, splintered, and scattered, yet dividing him and the shore, and then, as the whole mass broke and went rushing downstream, dashing up the bank and fell at the feet of the only other survivor, the poor driver.

Guide, sledge, provisions, and all had been torn from him, and he was alone in the wilderness.

"What matter!" he cried, bravely. "I have tracked the desert plains of Siberia with no other companion than my Maker, and shall I quail now? No—no, the road is open before me, health and strength still remain, and a task is to be done. Forward, and Heaven help me!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### A RACE FOR LIFE.

A wide expanse of plain, a dreary, snow-clad waste stretching out beyond the sight, the whole overhung by a dull sky; night coming on, and the wind howling and shrieking and bearing a storm in its train; and alone in all the desert a young man, mounted upon a weary and nearly exhausted horse.

Faster and faster the night settles down, fiercer and fiercer blows the wind, and now there comes a storm of snow and hail so fierce and blinding that the young man bows his head upon the horse's neck and seeks to escape its fury.

The lone rider was Feodor, who, having escaped from the river, rode away on the horse that had been saved, and in endeavoring to regain the path had wandered aimlessly about till night had overtaken him, and he was no nearer the road than before.

Blindly they made their way on, and after a while the horse stumbled, exhausted, and fell. He rolled over, gave a gush and fell back dead.

Feodor, realizing that he must reach a place of shelter or die in the storm, wandered on, and finally came upon a cave, into which he staggered.

He stretched himself out and was soon asleep, remaining so until the morning.

He took his bearings after rising, and found that he was in a short mountain range, which he had most luckily come upon in the night.

Crossing this, he saw from the highest point a town some five miles away, and this he reached in something more than an hour, procuring food, extra clothing and a conveyance to take him to the next station on the road, for all of which he did not fail to give thanks to Him who had so often brought him safe out of the perils which surrounded him.

"Once more forward," he exclaimed, "and may I pass as safely through all my dangers as I have from those of last night. Now for the frontier, and then for St. Petersburg."

From station to station, across the mountain, the Ural range which divides Europe and Asia—over the arid plains, through straggling villages and bustling cities, now in the mining regions, now in the rich country, carrying deliverance on, till at last, in the spring, he found himself some thousands of miles from St. Petersburg, and the greater part

of his horse, and he had not the courage to face the Tartars, who were then but a short distance away, and he turned his horse and rode on alone back through the forest.

"It is all right," said Feodor, "I am safe now." He noticed several wild-looking fellows, to whom he paid but little attention, and continued on his way, and as it was night, he did not stop, but went to bed.

The guide, who had come with him to the inn, had been told, he secured the door of his room as well as he could, put his gun at the ready, and went to sleep, prepared to awake at the least warning.

Nothing disturbed him, however, and in the morning, after having breakfasted, he took his pistol and his bill whip, and started on his way again, and the night before he reached Tomsk.

"What is that?" he said, and turned to him, and at the door he said, "and then he paused.

"To what? why do you hesitate?"

"I am afraid your right to it will be questioned."

"What? To—To—To—Is it not a warrant?"

"No, no, no, I have not got it with me men."

"Then, then?" he said, and as he was trying to stop, Feodor fired, the bullet hitting the Tartar's head. He had seen the night before among the woods a woodcutter with the driver of the vehicle he had himself engaged.

Feodor immediately took a hand in the discussion, but the man who had stopped him gave the convenience.

"Do you—yes? Well, then, why do you signet of the ground?"

"We are Russian," said the Tartar, "and here we pay no respect to such trifles."

"Then perhaps you will respect this?" and Feodor took the whip from the hands of the trembling guide and advanced upon the man who wished to take forcible possession of what he himself had already paid for.

"Strike me at your peril!" hissed the Tartar, still holding the bridle in his hand.

"Will you give me up my own?"

"Surrender the horse? No."

"Then take the consequences."

With that the brave fellow dashed forward, struck the Tartar twice across the face with his whip, and hurling himself upon him, forced him to let go the bridle.

The man, drawing a long-bladed knife, made a dash at the youth, with the evident intention of running him through without more ado.

Whipping out his pistols, the young man stood his ground bravely, crying out in warning tones:

"Peware how you advance! If I have but the form of a lion, the heart of a man beats in my bosom, the courage of a giant nerves my arm!"

"Who are you?" cried the fellow, pausing and forced to admire the youth's courage in spite of himself.

"A Russian, and your master! Be warned while there is yet time and do not seek to anger one who does not fear you, giant though you are."

The fellow made a furious dash at the youth, but a bullet cutting through his ear and the flash of powder in his face greatly cooled his ardor, and he paused abruptly.

His comrades stood aloof from him, evidently not desiring a brush with so determined a foe as the young Russian, and without their aid he did not dare to risk an attack alone.

The guide sprang up in the seat and drove out of the inn yard, and Feodor, keeping his eye upon the Tartars and holding his weapon in readiness, quickly crossed the open space, and as the wagon drove out upon the road ran after it, springing in, and ordered the guide to drive at his fastest.

The way to the next post led through a wild country and the distance was considerable, our hero being prepared to spend at least a day and a night upon the road.

The guide was right when he said that they had not seen the last of the Tartars, for they came upon a considerable party of them during the forenoon, all well mounted, and although not very tall, the black lords which they bestowed upon the young Russian indicated that they would be rough fellows to deal with.

"Now they'll wait the rain you best," said the guide, when the Tartars had passed, "and then look out for a chase."

"Then we must push on."

The party was not yet out of sight, when, from a bit of high, open ground, the guide, looking back, declared that the

Tartars were being followed by some, and when he could not say, and that they were to make it by driving fast and tack upon the points of their long lances.

Feodor was dumb on, and nothing more was seen of the Tartars for an hour, when the guide cried out that he saw a cloud of dust behind them.

"They are coming in it!" cried Feodor. "Drive on faster."

On the road, and Feodor did not look back for some time, but at last a shout attracted their attention, and turning, he saw a tall man riding ahead of the troop and calling for him to pause.

It was a memory of the meeting, the form and the characteristic garments he wore being easily recognized.

"Drive on!" cried Feodor, and the light wagon dashed over the road at a tremendous speed.

They were driving along at the most terrible speed when Feodor thought that it might be well to see how near the enemy were, and, looking around, he saw but one man in pursuit.

"There is but one," he cried. "The rest have left him. H'm! I am not afraid of one."

Whipping out his pistols the young man sent a shot flying out through the little window in the rear, aiming straight at his enemy, who, seeing him, called loudly for him to pause.

The answer was a half dozen shots, one after the other in quick succession, and in a moment Feodor suddenly saw the horse reel and fall headlong, the huge Tartar being hurled a considerable distance.

The last seen of him, he had risen and was shaking his shattered spear at the retreating travelers, while Feodor only heard him congratulating him upon having earned so kickingly well his first adventure.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE DESERTED HUT—A SURPRISE.

Upon reaching Tomsk, which did not seem to have changed materially since his departure, and where he was not recognized, Feodor procured a large tarantass and a pair of strong horses, and then looking about him for a trusty guide, came upon a man who appeared much older than one would have supposed him to be, from his active ways.

Feodor noticed that he limped some, and wore very loose leggings, and taking him aside he whispered:

"The brand of Siberia, the accursed marks of the fettters are hard to remove, are they not? You have been a political prisoner!"

"It is false!" cried the man, turning pale.

"You have nothing to fear from me," said the youth quickly. "Your hair, prematurely whitened, the hunted look on your face, your trembling limbs, all these tell the story."

"I have suffered enough," muttered the man. "I will die before I return to those hideous prisons, to the mines whence I escaped by the aid of one like myself."

"I am Feodor Petroff. I have tracked the desert plains of Siberia in aid of poor fellows like you who have escaped, and I have journeyed from this place to St. Petersburg and back, to bring freedom to my father and others as unfortunate."

"Are you the son of Nikolas Petroff?"

"I am."

"I know him; it was at his hut in the woods where I was taken and restored to life. Alas! I fear your long journey has been made in vain."

A sickening fear overcame the brave boy for an instant, and he staggered as if he had been shot.

"Not dead!" he gasped.

"No, but he has left the place where you were going. One whom they had succored basely betrayed the secret of the hut and its defenses in the hope of reward."

"And my father was seized—"

"With my own hand I slew the betrayer!" hissed the guide, and hurried a messenger off to warn Petroff. I was too late to prevent a force being sent against my aged friend, but not too late to warn him."

"Then the place has been abandoned?"

"Yes and is in ruins."

"And my sister—she is alive—Paulina? Do you know of her whereabouts?"

"The two maidens disappeared when Petroff did. Grodinski made his way here with me, and lived in disguise for some months, when he died."

"And the others?"

"Fled, or were overtaken, some by death, some by their ruthless pursuers."

"My father was none of these!"

"No."

"He must be found. You will go with me?"

"To the end of the earth."

The guide, whose name was Petrovsky, procured two men whom he knew, and whom he could trust, as he told Feodor, to accompany them on their journey, and then the party set out from Tomsk, bound for the hidden retreat of the exile.

They reached the neighborhood of the hut, and leaving the wagon in the wood, Feodor and the guide advanced cautiously toward it, weapons in hand.

Leaving the wood and crossing the open space just in front, the hut came in sight, but, to all appearances, it was deserted and in ruins.

"Shall we go forward?" whispered the guide.

Feodor was about to reply, when he suddenly heard a sound from within the hut, and, grasping his comrade's arm, he retreated behind a mound of earth, where they both lay flat upon the ground.

Then, to their surprise, they heard the words of an old song, sung in a clear, musical voice, sounding nearer and nearer every moment.

In a moment a young girl appeared at the door, looked cautiously around, and then advanced toward the wood.

Feodor's heart gave a great bound, for he had recognized the girl he loved, and who had promised to be faithful to him during his absence.

"Paulina!" he cried, springing to his feet, and in another moment he had clasped her in his arms.

The sudden appearance, as if out of the very ground, of one she had not seen for so long a time, caused the poor girl's heart to beat wildly, and with a low cry she fainted in her lover's arms.

"Here, we must arouse her!" cried the youth; as he sought to bring the maiden back to consciousness. "There is some mystery here which she alone can reveal to us."

At this moment Paulina opened her eyes, gave a gentle sigh, looked at Feodor, gasped, and cried joyously:

"Ah, I did not then dream! It is you, my own Feodor. Returned to me after so long an absence! You said you would come back, did you not? I alone believed it, for they said you were dead."

"Yes, Paulina, I have returned and bring good news. My father is pardoned. Tell me, he still lives?"

"Yes, and this will give him new life. Do you know that fearing to die, he confided an important secret to Carlotta and myself?"

"But he must not die; he is free to return to his old home, his name is clear of guilt, his innocence is assured. Take me to him, for I will not delay a moment before telling him my good news."

"Gently, gently; good news sometimes kills sooner than bad. Wait here; I will tell him of your arrival, but not so rapidly as you would, for that might be dangerous."

Then with a smile, and kissing him upon the lips ere she went, she left him and disappeared inside the hut.

Every moment seemed an age till she returned, but at last she did go, and with her appeared Carlotta and Petroff, the latter having lived greatly in Feodor's absence, but looking still the noble-hearted man he had ever been.

With a glad cry, Petroff opened his arms as he beheld Feodor, and the youth, tearing the precious document he bore from his bosom, rushed forward, holding it above his head, and crying excitedly:

"A pardon, father mine, a pardon. Thank God that I have not toiled in vain!"

Then, overcome by his excitement, the boy fell fainting into his father's arms, and it was he, and not the sire, for whom anxiety was now felt, lest too great a stress of feeling should deprive him of that life which for so long had been devoted to their interests.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE EXILES BEGIN THEIR HOMELWARD JOURNEY.

Now that Petroff had received a pardon for having done nothing for which he could have been imprisoned in any enlightened country, and being free to return, preparations were at once made for leaving Siberian wilds forever.

Some little time was taken up in making preparations for departure, but at last there was nothing to wait for, the hut was abandoned, and our friends turned their faces toward that home they had left so long before, and which, at one time, they had scarcely dared to ever see again.

At Tomsk Petrovsky and his friends left them with good wishes for the future, and Feodor was left to lead the party which, having passed over the road three times, he was perfectly capable of doing.

From town to town, from village to village, day after day, week after week they journeyed on, with wheels upon hundred's of miles. By the time the sun had risen and never was the day so bright as that.

In the reading room of a little inn in a small Russian town, through which the road led to the coast, the innkeeper, the place serving as cafe, office, sitting room and parlor, all in one, sat a man of singular appearance.

From his long, white hair, and his eyes, which were half closed, his heavy coat, his flat cap, and his crooked nose, it would fully bear out this supposition.

It was early evening, and the old man was alone, the innkeeper and his assistants being busy at that moment in other parts of the house, and while they were away the old man sat by the fire and glanced through his big spectacles over a copy of a St. Petersburg paper of a by no means recent date.

He sat motionless for some time, and then, throwing down his paper, muttered angrily:

"I suppose I am a fool to remain here when I might easily have escaped to France, to England, to America, or anywhere I chose, and might do so yet if I would. Who could penetrate this disguise? No one—not even the fiend himself."

The man arose, paced the floor nervously for several minutes, and then resumed his musings where he had so suddenly broken off.

"Why do I stay and run all this risk, then? Bah! There is no risk. Who would know me in this guise? Why do I stay? Because I hate that man, because I hate his son, because I would crush him! The marks upon my face, made by his hands, burn into my very soul, and nothing but his blood can wipe them out. Can I forego my revenge and fly to other lands when I think of the insults he has heaped upon me, of the disappointments I have suffered through him, of the necessity of having to hide and watch every man I see lest he should prove to be a spy on my track?"

He paused as if waiting for an answer, and presently hissed back a reply:

"No, I do not forget all this, and until I know that he is dead I will continue to watch and wait like the vulture for its prey. Ha, ha! The newspapers are great things. How they do keep a man posted. But for this little d—l patch of half a dozen lines, wouldn't, no doubt, to quiet his anxious friends, I should have thought Peter and his son both dead, but now I know that they are alive, and I hate avengers."

Then, resuming his walk, the man clattered nervously at the air, and cried angrily:

"If I had you by the throat, Nikolai Petroff, you would see if Peter Lazarev ever fought an injury. What right had you to be rich and I have none of your wealth? What right had your proud daughter to scorn my advances? Are we not all born equal? I am as cool as the Czar himself, and it is but an accident that has使 me like what I am. I might have been there as well as he."

So the crafty spy had a cause from which, and was now biding his time for vengeance?

Well, the old traitor was wiser than he thought.

There was the sound of galloping horses' hoofs without, and presently a hand some young fellow, well proportioned, and bearing the signs of power and influence, entered the room, looked around, and seated himself on a feature,

"Ah, old father, are you the only one alive? I will not ask you to see to our horses, certainly, but please you can tell me where to find mine?"

Lazinschi started as if shot, and called out a cry of astonishment.

The man before him was Feodor Petroff, the famous tracker of the Steppes, but hand as it did not tell him all he was looking then when he had left so suddenly, and he knew no way all this the scoundrel had lied more interestingly than ever.

In order to gain time to consider this, he took time to drink, and Feodor, who had been drinking, took time to talk with him, the innkeeper himself, after all his exertions, was the first to burst into the room, all giddy and excited.

"He's stone deaf, and the last time I'll say it, my awfu-

him," said the man, indicating Laszinski by a motion of his thumb. "Would the young master be pleased to wish accommodations for the night?"

He would, and for four persons, with supper at once and liqueur after the meal, and as an earnest of his good intentions, he tossed the host a gold coin of considerable value.

Supper was served in this room, the landlord apologizing for the presence of the old man, who sat in an obscure corner, and seemed dead to all that went on around him.

So they dined, and dabbled as though he were not in the room, and after supper, when it was late, retired to their several rooms for the night, the spy noting the locality of each by what was said.

When all had retired he followed off to his own room and there proceeded to put his newly formed plans into execution.

Late that night the inmates were alarmed by the cry of fire, and Feodor had scarcely awakened and hurried on his outer garments when the door of his room was suddenly burst open, and two men in black, threw a heavy blanket over him, and hurried him away before he could cry out.

Petroff, aroused by the cries of the servants, jumped up, dressed him self hurriedly, and hastened to Carlotta's room, where the fire seemed the hottest.

Barred through the wall of smoke and flame that rose before him, the brave man braced himself against the door, and sent it crashing and ruined upon the floor within.

Following his master in his haste, and wrapping her securely in blanket, Petroff dashed through the line of fire and smoke, clinging to her, and fending his hair and whiskers, but bearing his precious charge safe and unharmed to the hall below.

Paulina had escaped, but nothing was seen of Feodor, and the boy said that the old man was missing as well.

Petroff followed, followed by the servants, and bursting into the room that Feodor had occupied, found it deserted.

The old man was not there, and at this moment the landlord entered, exclaiming that the flames were increasing in force, and that it was well to save himself no must be quick about it.

Seizing a blanket from the bed, Petroff covered his head with it, rushed to the stairs, and dashed down them at a leap, bursting on to the next flight through fire and smoke, and making his way in safety to the ground floor.

Hardly had Feodor got before the flames broke out with redoubled force, and as there were no means of putting them out it was soon seen that the place was doomed.

They hurried to the stable, and got out the horses and wagon, but still Feodor was missing, no one having seen anything of him since the evening before.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CONCLUSION.

When Feodor was so rudely carried away, his captors took him to some distance before setting him down, and he knew that he was in the outer air by the change of the temperature.

After a while he was taken into a house and put down, the blanket still covering his face, and before he could remove it he heard a voice say:

"Are you the man brought the lady? Let me look at her."

Feodor, suddenly springing up, threw aside the blanket and held his hand ready. Poor Laszinski, in the guise of the old man he had seen at the inn.

"Is it you, Feodorovitch?" he cried. "At last I have you in my grasp."

"What juggling is this?" cried the spy. "You have brought me the girl, I see."

"Reckon well of the landing on the right, you said!" exclaimed one of the men.

Having now what was taken up by these hurried questions and answers, and Feodor quickly realized that some foul plot had been contrived, will be slept.

"What René's work have you been doing now, Laszinski?" he cried. "You wished to abduct my sister, to destroy me, perhaps my father as well."

"Yes, and it is not too late!" yelled the spy, in a rage. "Upon him, men; back him to pieces."

The two scoundrels, regular hired assassins and tools of the spy, drew their knives and sprang at the young Russian.

He dropped to the floor in a twinkling, and in their impetuous fury the two murderers fell upon Laszinski himself, and before they had time to realize their mistake, had plunged their weapons up to the hilt in his bosom.

All had happened in less than a moment, and before the murderers realized their mistake the master was dead.

"The best job you ever did!" cried Feodor, leaping to his feet. "Of all your crimes this will go unpunished."

The men screeched aloud for an instant, and then, by a simultaneous impulse, they rushed toward the door.

Feodor leaped aside and the two at a single dash'd outside, evidently living but dead, and that escape from the place.

He quickly followed, leaving the spy lying dead on the floor, and making no further examination of the body or of the place where it lay.

His plot had miscarried through a misunderstanding, and Feodor had been destined instead of Carlotta, while the poor girl, but for the timely interference of Petroff, would have suffered the death intended for her brother.

Guided by the light of the burning post-office, Feodor made his way to the post, and, just as his friends were beginning to mourn his untimely death, appeared among them.

It was impossible to save the building, but the few neighbors who lived near had gathered around, and they offered shelter to all who wished it.

Precuring additional raiment, Feodor accompanied the others to the house of a peasant, where they were made comfortable for the night.

His papers and other valuables had been destroyed, with the exception of the pardon and the ring of the grand duke, which were kept in a sealed metal case, and were found, after the fire, uninjured.

They had money enough for their actual needs, however, and now that they were so near home their losses were not worth thinking of.

Feodor told his father how the villain Laszinski had perished, and what his latest plot had been, so far as he had gathered from the details of sentences he had heard while in the presence of the plotters.

Petroff could not but rejoice at the removal of the villain from his path, and his own words had been confirmed, he having said that vengeance would overtake the wretch in the end.

The party now hurried forward toward their journey's end, and, by selling the tarantulas and horses which they had purchased outright at Tomsk, obtained money enough to complete their journey by rail.

Once in St. Petersburg, the returned exile had no difficulty in recovering his hidden fortune, and once more he was surrounded with all the comforts of a home.

Had his beloved wife been alive there would have been nothing wanting to complete his happiness, but one rarely enjoys perfect bliss in this world, and the keenest pleasures are those that are mingled with occasional pain.

Petroff did not care to enter the life of trade again, and Feodor was of too active a nature to do so, preferring a life of bustle and strife.

He was married to Paulina, and Carlotta met a young man whom she had formerly known, and their nuptials were celebrated at the same time with those of Feodor and Paulina.

"After all I have seen, after all I know," said Feodor, gravely, one day, "I am convinced that Russia is not the country for advancement. Tyranny still holds sway in spite of good intentions and all that, and the emperor is powerless to change a rule that has lasted for centuries. The government has always been and always will be despotic, and he cannot change it."

The result of these very decided views was that the young Russian and his wife, together with Carlotta and her husband and the elder Petroff, all emigrated to America, taking with them their wealth, and leaving the country of their birth without a regret.

In this land of the free Feodor finds abundant opportunity for advancement, for improvement, and for a higher culture; and though he has not lived here long, now would not change his adopted country for all the empires of the world, and so we leave him, rising from step to step, and gradually forgetting his wild life upon the barren plains of Siberia when succoring the oppressed of the nation.

Next week's issue will contain "ACROSS THE CONTINENT WITH A CIRCUS; OR, THE TWIN RIDERS OF THE RING."

# FROM ALL POINTS

## AN UPSTAIRS SWIMMING TANK.

The customary and most natural location for a swimming tank is in the basement of a building, but in the new home of the Omaha Athletic Club it was decided to put the swimming pool in the third floor where it would be readily accessible to the gymnasium and locker rooms. The tank is 76 feet long and 26 feet wide, holding 120,000 gallons of water, weighing 500 tons. The swimming tank has called for an unusual construction, the fifth floor being carried on heavy girders that span the swimming-pool, while the fourth floor, which is in the form of a balcony around the pool, is suspended on hanger rods let down from the fifth floor girders.

## FORTIFY GUAM

The proper and necessary answer to the taking and development of the Caroline Islands by Japan, navy authorities think, is to proceed immediately with a modern style fortification of the American island of Guam.

It became known recently that the most prominent navy officers believe the fortification of Guam should have been begun soon after the United States fleet went around the world during the Roosevelt administration. The subject has been discussed at length by the General Navy Board and the latest developments make it a subject of prime importance.

The navy experts believe that the first thing that should be done is for the United States to establish the most powerful radio service at Guam. It is pointed out that if the Cable Commission at Paris should not take away from Japan her exclusive right to the four German cables operating from the island of Yap, cable communication could at any time be cut off on any line which Japan controls.

What the navy officers have in mind, however, is that, after this preparatory step, the United States should do at Guam as it did at Manila, fortify it to the limit and make it a base not only for commerce, but for as many warships as the necessities of any case might warrant.

## DANIELS OPENS GREAT DRY DOCK.

With Mrs. Josephus Daniels, wife of the Secretary of the Navy, pressing the button that flooded the structure, the great Pearl Harbor dry dock was dedicated August 21 by the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Daniels.

The dry dock is one of the largest in the world. It is 1,001 feet long and has an inside width of 138

feet and inside depth of 32 feet. It will accommodate any ship afloat, and represents an investment of more than \$5,000,000.

The dock and naval base have a setting in what is considered one of the finest natural and most beautiful harbors in the world. Entirely landlocked in a rim of hills, Pearl Harbor could anchor all the naval fleets of the world out of view from the open sea.

Pearl Harbor has an area of approximately ten square miles. Its depth is approximately sixty feet. Entrance to the harbor has been made safe for all time by dredging and other work done by the United States.

The dry dock has been under construction since 1910. Its opening had been planned to take place long before to-day, but various delays and the war caused postponement.

The most serious delay occurred when the entire bottom of the dry dock upheaved suddenly, ruining all work that had been done and delaying construction for a year. First theories were that an earthquake had caused the mishap. Then engineers decided the dredged out material left a floor softer than surrounding terrain and the pressure of the latter caused the centre to upheave.

The accident necessitated a new plan of construction. Concrete was moulded into huge blocks, submerged and securely anchored. From this beginning the other work went rapidly forward.

The dock is operated by the latest type of machinery. Electrically driven pumps free the dock of water after the entrance of a ship for repairs.

Ancient Hawaii, through the sons and daughters of its warriors, welcomed Mr. Daniels and his party and the officers and men of the dreadnought New York, which arrived here early to-day.

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# INTERESTING ARTICLES

## JAPANESE CENSORS REMOVE 2,350 KISSES

The police of Japan do not like to see kissing in public and, therefore, film stars are not permitted to embrace on the screen. In six months up to March 1 the police censors removed 2,350 kisses from the films.

Only one kiss was allowed to remain. It was a kiss granted to Columbus by Queen Isabella and was shown in Tokio only, as the censors deleted it before permitting the photoplay "Columbus" to appear in the provinces.

Three hundred and fifty-three embraces were omitted from films, states *The Far East*. The titles of 2,111 photoplays were altered by the censors and 127 mud scenes were killed. Reels entirely prohibited numbered 57.

## CELLAR DIGGERS UNEARTH REVOLUTIONARY RELICS

The ruins of a camp occupied by the Hessians during the American Revolution were unearthed on Broadway, New York, between 169th and 170th streets two or three days ago by workmen who were excavating for the foundations of a new motion picture theater. The diggers came upon an open fireplace and the flooring of a hut some twelve feet below the surface of the ground, and Reginald P. Bolton and William S. Calder of the New York Historical Society declared that the ruins were part of the old Hessian camp.

Mr. Bolton and Mr. Calder, as soon as they heard of the find, undertook to supervise the rest of the digging and workmen brought to view several gold buttons on which were stamped the Hessian coat-of-arms, other buttons which appeared to have been worn by private soldiers and several bullets.

A second fireplace was also found, built like the first, of round cobble stones and in a good state of preservation. According to the record of the Historical Society, the Hessians built some forty or more huts in that locality during the battles with the Continental Army under Washington, and Mr. Bolton and Mr. Calder expect to discover other buildings as well as other interesting relics.

## SKELETONS OF PREHISTORIC ANIMALS

Bones of a prehistoric camel and those of a three-toed horse were uncovered in the caves between The Dalles and Cascade, Oregon, recently, by a field expedition of twenty men from the University of Chicago, under the direction of J. Harlan Bretz. The geologists are touring the West, studying the rock formation of the Cascade range.

The bones of the prehistoric horse indicate that this section of the country was the home of ancient Dobbin perhaps 2,000,000 years ago. The three-

toed horse of The Dalles probably belongs to the miocene age, according to the scientists.

The prehistoric horse was smaller and in almost every particular different from the modern horse. Its teeth were not grinders, but more fang-like, and its hoofs were three-toed.

The find of the camel bone is perhaps more significant, from a scientific point of view, than the uncoverings of the horse bones, since there are no living wild types of camel, save one, a two-humped variety discovered in Central Asia. So bones of the prehistoric camel are the only means by which science is able to trace the evolution of the camel from its earliest forms.

This prehistoric camel was not much larger than a large jack rabbit and had no hump. However, its feet bones are not unlike those of the present-day camel, and it was provided with the peculiar stomach divided into separate water compartments.

## NEW STAMP ISSUES STIR COLLECTORS

Statesmen and schoolboys are not the only folk who are concerned with the changing map of Europe. Stamp collectors are having their troubles, too, though there are indications that the near future may produce something approaching stability in the philatelic affairs of new Europe. An artistic contest has been opened to secure designs for a series of unified postage stamps to be used in the new Jugoslav State of Serbia-Croatia-Slavonia, in place of the corporate a portrait of King Peter, and the words "Kraljevstvo S. H. S." (Kingdom of Serbia-Croatia-Slavonia). This inscription in the form of an overprint has already been imposed on the Bernian postage stamp series of 1912, re-issued under the new administration.

In a few weeks' time also there is promised a new definite postage stamp issue for Poland, the designs of which will include characteristic views and a portrait bust of President Paderewski. The forthcoming stamps of Czechoslovakia will likewise include the counterfeit presentation of its president, Dr. Masaryk, together with scenes of national life. The latest addition to the stamp-issuing states of new Europe is the West Ukraine Republic.

Portugal must now be added to the growing list of countries where the issue of commemorative (Peace Stamps) is imminent. Two notable Japanese artists are responsible for the designs of four particular peace stamps now being printed by the Government Bureau of Printing at Tokio. The French Chamber of Deputies has requested the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs to create and issue as speedily as possible a series of postage stamps commemorating the war of 1914-1918. The issue of Peace and Victory stamps is reported as imminent in a number of British colonies and possessions.

# ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

## KNOCKED OUT TEETH CAN BE REPLANTED

When one's front teeth are knocked out there is no need to leave them on the floor, for they can be reinserted very well by a good dentist. Dr. H. M. Savery tells in the *Lancet* (London), of two cases, in each of which two of the front teeth were completely dislocated from their sockets.

In one case the teeth were placed in salt water while the dentist carefully washed out the sockets. Then they were reinserted, a stitch or two were placed in the gums and the jaws were bandaged shut so that the teeth bit on a pad of line. In the other case the teeth still hung to the gums, so the sockets were cleaned out without detaching the teeth.

In both cases the teeth became solidly fixed and the patients could use them for normal biting a few months after the accident.

Dr. C. De Witt Henry of New York replaced not long ago the teeth of a truck driver that had been knocked out in a collision. The man had picked his teeth from the gutter and ran up to the dentist's office carrying them in his hand.

## THE CAT IN THE WAR

There is one thing a cat hates more than she hates dogs, and that is gas. One whiff of poison gas, scented from the other side of no man's land before mere man has got an inkling of what is coming, and up goes her back and her fur stands on end, and she begins to whine her displeasure.

Who it was that first discovered this aversion remains a mystery, but rumor has it that it was someone in the British War Office. So they extended the military service acts to cats.

The stray cats of Britain—and there are many of them, as is shown by the fact that the Royal S. P. C. A. painlessly destroy over 30,000 every year—received their first calling-up notice a couple of years back.

The contract for the supply of pussy to the army was secured by a London bird dealer, and cats of all sorts soon began to pour into his establishment. No tribunal protected them. If they had no homes of their own, and were sound in wind and limb, they were accepted for military service. About half a million cats were supplied to the army.

From other sources it is learned of the cat's value as a gas detector. Equally important was her work as a destroyer of rats and vermin—a work in which she excelled and took a lively interest.

She proved very useful in connection with submarine experiments, and frequently went under water in various contrivances in order to test the life-sustaining qualities of the air chambers.

So pussy at least has done her bit in the great war.

## PINS AND FORTUNES.

E. H. Harriman, the railroad wizard, died, leaving behind him an estate valued at approximately \$75,000,000, but he knew the value of trifles. One day he picked up a small steel letter clip dropped on the floor by a careless employee.

"I'd like to have as my annual income," said Mr. Harriman, "the value of material thrown away every year by indifferent workers in the offices and factories of America. In a few years I'd be the richest man in the world."

Nor was Mr. Harriman given to business exaggeration. His quick observation invariably made him cognizant of universal waste in the indicated direction; his keen sense of financial values rated it closely. And the truth enunciated by the railroad financier and magnate by the ordinary man or woman of business may be attested at every turn of the eye.

A Chicago business man not long since cast about in his mind for ways and means of saving money for a special and specially desired avenue of business increase. An experienced adviser suggested looking after the "small leaks." The business man, recognizing the wisdom of such suggestion, looked over his plant quietly but sharply. He was shocked at the continual waste going on all about him. Sheets of paper on which only a few words had been written, thrown into the waste-basket instead of being used for making notes or similar scratch pad purpose. Pins, clips, rubber bands, blotters, erasers dropped on the floor and never recovered. Ink and mucilage bottles, carelessly set down, tipped over. Typewriters left uncovered, undusted, with unwarranted repair bills in consequence. Electric lights left burning when not in use.

The employer meditated, took action, made an interesting announcement. The office boy turning in to him the greatest number of salvaged articles in good condition at the end of the week would receive a Thrift Stamp for every 50. The boy with the largest month's salvage record would find a War Savings Stamp in his pay envelope. The offer would be repeated from month to month.

The offer didn't amount to much after the first few weeks because it impressed such a good lesson. At the end of the first month, despite the extra care of the wondering clerical employes, the employer's exhibit served as text of a terse little sermon that set all the office force thinking—and saving. Don't be ashamed to practice care in small matters. Waste of any sort is criminal. Being careful means being successful. It may save or start a fortune in the long run when you stoop to pick up that tiny pin.

# LUCKY JOE BROWN

—OR—  
THE SMARTEST BOY IN NEW YORK

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A serial story)

CHAPTER XXI (Continued).

"But I want to be kept busy, Mr. McGuffey," replied Joe. "Isn't there something else I can take off your hands that you can try me at? I can only fail."

"I'll think it up and see," was the brief reply.

And as the manager walked off ahead of him Joe thought he heard him mutter:

"A new broom sweeps clean."

"And that's what I mean to do," thought Joe. "You will find, my friend, that this particular new broom will keep right on sweeping clean."

Mr. McGuffey, when they came down in the elevator, told Joe to go back to the office, and it was time before he put in an appearance there himself.

He paid no further attention to Joe all day except to send him with an occasional message to the office, the chef, the steward, or the housekeeper.

It was the toughest day Joe had ever put in. To sit there in the little office with Mr. McGuffey, doing nothing, and with the manager practically ignoring his presence, almost drove him mad.

"If this thing is going to keep up right along I quit," resolved Joe. "Senator Blakeslee or no Senator Blakeslee, I can't stand it to sit here sucking my thumb."

He wished that Mr. McGuffey would go over the bills and tell him whether the only work he had done was satisfactory or not, but even that small pleasure failed to blow his way.

When dinner time came Joe was sent to eat with the bell-boys or pages, and at supper it was the same.

Mr. McGuffey told him when he came back from supper that he need not "hang around" any longer, and needless to remark it was a relief to get out on the street alone.

Altogether Joe found this just about the most trying day he had ever put in.

But after he got to bed he felt differently.

"This can't be helped," he reflected. "The man don't know me; he don't want me. I have been forced upon him, and he don't like it. All I can do is to live this down and watch my chance to be of some real use to him, if I last long enough. Patience is what is required here."

Next morning Joe got to the little office at half-past seven, instead of nine.

The place was clean, of course, for there were plenty of servants to look out for that, but it was in great disorder.

Joe jumped in and straightened everything up,

taking care to touch nothing up on Mr. McGuffey's desk.

Then he took the bills of the day before out of the bill basket, in which each bill was deposited when it came in, and long before Mr. McGuffey arrived his only job was done.

It was half-past nine that morning before the manager turned up.

He said good-morning civilly enough, and told Joe to get to work on his bills.

"That's all done, sir, and I hope you found yesterday's work all right," was the reply.

"It was right. You are prompt, it seems."

"I only want to work, sir. There are several mistakes in this morning's batch of bills. Shall I show you?"

"Yes."

Joe pointed them out.

One was a glaring error, a manifest overcharge.

Mr. McGuffey sent Joe with the bill to a butcher in the Gansevoort Market to have it changed.

When he returned he was sent uptown on an errand.

This made a break, and altogether the day was not as irksome as the one preceding.

But more bad days followed, yet there were also good ones.

Joe soon had entire charge of the bills.

Little by little he began to get an insight into Mr. McGuffey's duties, and found himself able to be of real help to the manager in many ways.

He began to like the word, and to like his boss. Better still, he knew that the manager was beginning to like him.

And so the weeks passed, and by the time spring came Joe found himself well settled in his new position.

It was with a feeling of pride that he heard Mr. McGuffey say to him one evening when they were winding up the work of the day:

"Upon my word, Joe, I am beginning to wonder what I ever did without you. You certainly have made good all along the line, and I am ready to endorse the send-off Senator Blakeslee gave you when he wrote that letter. I also say that you are the smartest boy in New York."

## CHAPTER XXII.

JOE MAKES MONEY AND THINKS ABOUT MAKING LOVE.

The duties of a hotel manager are never-ending, and his hours are very long.

Before Joe worked in it was unusual for Mr. McGuffey to get to bed before midnight, but now he quit early, for Joe had taken the "night watch" off his hands.

This brought him into direct contact with the guests, for the manager is the man who receives all the complaints and adjusts all differences.

(To be continued.)

# AFTER BLACK DIAMONDS

—OR—

## THE BOYS OF COAL SHAFT NO. 3

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## BOB MAKES SERIOUS ACCUSATIONS.

The next morning found Robert feeling all right, after a night of rest. He took an early breakfast with his mother, and then left for his work.

Young Newton arrived at the mine just before the blowing of the work whistle, and started with the others toward the mouth of the mine, when he heard the voice of someone calling him:

"Newton! Bob Newton!"

He turned, as did several others, and saw old man Merlin beckoning to him from the door of the engine-room.

Swinging his dinner pail to his other arm he turned and went quickly back to the place where stood the aged operator.

"I want you over at the office for a little while," he said briefly, leading the way toward the offices of the company.

While several of the miners looked after the young fellow and the operator, they walked across the slack road and reached the front door.

"Bob," after they had reached the inner sanctum of the president, "I find this morning that the pit boss is sick, and the surveyor is out of town—sick sister or something else of the kind. I've got to have someone to take up this work this morning. You're the only man that I can trust to see to the placing of all these supports. Will you take the job?"

Robert was dumb with surprise. In his best moments of anticipation he had never thought of anything of this kind. But he was ready for it.

"All right," replied the boy. "I'll take it."

He wheeled out of the office and hurried to the mouth of the mine, the old man coming right behind him to post the bulletin and to send word to the foreman below.

Robert stepped aboard the cage and was lowered away into the darkness of the shaft, arriving a moment later at the bottom. He stepped over to the first car, and asked to be driven to the first entry north.

The mule started off at a trot under the whip of the driver, and the young fellow arrived a few minutes later at the first entry leading to the north, finding there a number of men ready to go to work, but not being under the active direction of anyone.

The foreman came right behind in another car, and announced to the men who it was in charge of the work for the day.

"All right, fellows!" called Robert. "We will get right at this and fix up the supports and timbers on this side!"

The men went at the work at once, and when the noon hour was announced and they stepped back to their lunches from out the buckets they had advanced a full hundred yards.

It was in the middle of the afternoon, and the men were working with a right good will. Stanton, who was a member of the gang, had been loafing along, and Robert several times had called his attention to the fact that it would not be allowed.

The young fellow climbed forward, over a lot of timbers which had fallen, to see about the stays and shoring, when Stanton pulled a support upon one of the side walls.

"Look out, there!" shouted one of the miners. "That'll let the whole thing drop in!"

Before any one could prevent the act, Stanton kicked out another of the supports, and all the timbers at the top fell with a loud crash. Young Newton, creeping under some of them, was caught by the fall and buried under the heavy timbers.

"Get through there and pull them off!" shouted one of the workmen. "Young Bob Newton is in there!"

Bob, when he heard the crashing of the timbers on the ground, knowing that they should not be falling, had looked up quickly and saw the act of Stanton. Quick as a flash he threw himself to the ground of the entry, crawling beneath the tangle of timbers at which he was working.

This alone saved him from being crushed to death when the roofing came down, and here the men found him an hour later when they had pulled away most of the timbers and shored up the sides. By this time it was the hour of ceasing work, and they walked down the entry toward the bottom of the shaft, a very quiet crowd.

"Mr. Merlin, I wish to prefer charges against Stanton," said the boy, as he walked into the office of the president a little later.

He followed this by telling the story of how the fellow had tried to bury him under the timbers and crush him.

The operator called up the chief of police and told him that he wished to prefer charges against the miner.

That evening, as the men were walking about the town, Stanton was taken to the station, where charges were preferred against him by both Robert and the operator of Shaft No. 3.

Almost immediately bond was offered and taken by the miners' union, and then a hasty meeting of the union was called.

On the street Robert heard of the meeting and determined to attend. He went to the hall in the company of Jim Norcross, who was urging him not to be present at the meeting.

(To be continued.)

# PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 17, 1919.

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## GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

As a consequence of the large demand for electrolytic copper during the war, the price advanced very greatly and many concerns for manufacturing this product were opened in Japan. The raw material for this industry was obtained from the Chinese bronze coin, which was imported into the country in large quantities until the Chinese government prohibited its exportation. At present the prices of electrolytic and ordinary copper varies so slightly that it does not pay to manufacture the former. Copper sheet manufacturers are also hard hit by the decline in prices and some of the large concerns are suspending operations or giving up this branch of business.

Eastbound express train No. 4, of the New York Central, consisting of seven cars, on Sunday, May 14th, being more than an hour behind time, traversed the division from Elkhart, Ind., to Toledo, Ohio, 133.01 miles, in one hour, 54 minutes, or at the rate of 70 miles an hour. On June 8th, 1905, a train of the Pennsylvania Lines, Western division, No. 18, east-bound, second section, three cars, was run 50 miles at 79 miles an hour; 100 miles at 77.2 miles an hour; and 200 miles, including two stops, at 71.3 miles an hour. On October 24th of the same year, a Pennsylvania special train of four cars, westbound, weighing 260 tons, was run from Crestline, Ohio, to Clarke Junction, Indiana, 257.4 miles, at 74.55 miles an hour. In this run a distance of 131 miles was covered at 77.81 miles an hour.

The Turkish crescent, although now regarded as essentially Mohammedan in significance, is, it appears, of Christian origin. A crescent moon was the emblem of the Byzantine Empire and of the Eastern Church. The Turks adopted it as a badge of triumph after the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

With reference to the crescent, the story of the

origin of the crescent-shaped Vienna roll is of curious interest. It arose in the sixteenth century, when the Turks were besieging Vienna. Failing to carry the city by assault they began to mine the walls. At that period the city's bakehouses were in the walls under the fortifications, and when the mines were almost through the sound of the work was heard in the underground bakehouses, and an alarm was given. To celebrate this event, the bakers of Vienna adopted the Turkish emblem as the form in which to mold and bake their bread.

## GRINS AND CHUCKLES

Benevolent Old Gent—I am sorry, Johnny, to see you have a black eye. Promising Youth—You go home and be sorry for your own little boy—he's got two.

Mr. Oldboy—Why do you bring so much water, Tommy? I merely asked for a drink. Tommy—I thought you'd need more than a glassful, 'cause sister said you was the dryest old stick she ever knew.

An item is going the rounds of the Canadian press to the effect that a New York State paper is being sued because a comp made an obituary conclude, "May he roast in peace!"

Mrs. A.—Mrs. Baker says she'd give a good deal to know where you get your clothes. Mrs. B. (smiling)—She likes them, then, doesn't she? Mrs. A.—No. She thinks they wear wonderfully.

One morning Mr. Smith was heard talking to himself while making his morning toilet in a manner that denoted much perturbation. "I wonder," said Mrs. Smith, "what provoked father now?" "Oh, it's nothing much, mother," answered little William. "I just put a tube of sister's oil paints in place of his tube of tooth paste."

The teacher of a certain school received the following note, explaining the absence of one of her pupils the day before. "Plese excuse Henry for absents yesterday. Him an' me got a chance of a ride to a funeral in a carriage, an' I let him stay home as he had never rode in a carriage, an' never went to a funeral, 'nor had many other pleasures. So plese excuse."

A Minneapolis woman had as her guests for a Sunday dinner four soldiers who had received her invitation through the War Camp Community Club. During dinner the hostess was very much annoyed by her Swedish maid. Every time she served the boys she burst out giggling. Unable to stand it longer, the woman followed her into the kitchen and demanded: "Why, Hilda, what do you mean by insulting my guests in this manner? I can't understand it." "Oh," giggled Hilda, "one of them soldiers ban my fellow."

# A FEW GOOD ITEMS

## TRAINMEN GET \$59 MORE A MONTH THAN GOVERNOR OR COLONEL IN ARMY

Railroad trainmen are being paid more than State Governors and high officers of the army, according to a letter from R. L. O'Donnell, general manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad, read to the House by Representative Blanton of Texas.

"Freight engineers are now receiving \$392.35 a month, passengers train engineers \$376.85, Mr. O'Donnell's letter said," Mr. Blanton told the House, "and yet the Governor of Texas receives only \$333.33, and a colonel in the army the same amount."

"Freight conductors receive \$313.90 and passenger conductors \$308.55, which is more than a lieutenant-colonel's pay of \$291.66, a major's of \$250 and a captain's of \$208.33."

## WOMAN LOST IN WOODS TWO NIGHTS

Catskill is trying to learn the identity of a well-dressed woman who appeared at the residence of C. ster Fredenburg, on the road to Athens, a mile north of the village, August 23d, in a dazed and faltering condition, asking for water.

The woman's condition was such that Mrs. Fredenburg at once called Dr. Rapp, of Catskill, who found the woman almost dead from exposure and a lack of nourishment and unable to tell her name or where she was from, except to say she had been lost in the woods since Thursday.

The woman, apparently a person of refinement, seems about 28 or 30 years of age. She wears a purple satin dress stamped "Genting," tan stockings and shoes. She weighs about 100 pounds and has brown hair and blue eyes.

Later she said she had been wandering in the woods since the storm Thursday. It is evident that she was exposed to the storm of last Thursday night, one of the worst that has ever swept over the Catskills.

The shock has been so great that so far she has been unable to recall her name or address.

No one has been missing from the local boarding-houses, and where the woman came from or who she is is a mystery, the only clue to her residence being a Philadelphia paper of August 19. She is being detained in the hospital ward here, and the police of New York and Philadelphia have been notified.

## TRUCKING FREIGHT OVER GOBI DESERT

An agricultural colonization company has just purchased thirty-three-ton trucks of American man-

ufacture, which will be used on a freighting proposition beside which anything in the nature of such service in this country seems to be relatively easy. These trucks are to make the trip from the port to colonies in the vicinity of Kulja, China, approximately 2,000 miles in the interior and which are without any means of communication save by roads and caravan routes across the Kobi desert. It has been the custom to send a caravan consisting of camels carrying packs from Tientsin, the well-known port, several times a year.

The average camel load is about 200 pounds and the daily mileage is about 20, so that about six months is required for the road journey of 4,000 miles. On the march from Tientsin to Julja food, seed, supplies, etc., are carried, and returning various agricultural products are packed. As might be assumed, the cost of transportation is very great, despite the cheapness of labor and camels, and the value of anything carried by caravan is much increased when delivered at its destination. This large cost impelled the Eastern Turkistan Agricultural Colonization Company to purchase trucks which will replace the camels, and these will be used with trailers so that the load capacity of each haulage unit will be six tons. The expectation is to make the round trip in about 20 days, carrying a total of 180 tons. The 30 trucks are intended to equal in freightage a caravan of 4,000 camels and 1,000 men, which would have a total freight tonnage not exceeding 400 tons. The caravan could possibly make two yearly trips, carrying 800 tons, and the trucks will carry 2,000 to 2,200 tons in the 12 monthly trips. The operating plan is to establish stations at intervals of about 200 miles, where water, fuel, lubricant and facilities for making ordinary repairs will be maintained. The trucks will be driven by Chinese drivers, who will be instructed by an American expert, who was employed at the truck factory and who is accompanying the machines to China to become superintendent of operations.

Besides the 30 trucks, equipment for two complete machine shops, including lathes, drill presses, grinders, shapers, forges and all the machine and hand tools required for such service stations as are the vogue in America was shipped. One shop will be at Tientsin, and the other at Kulja, and between these there will be nine other shops, where whatever attention is necessary may be given. Besides the equipment stated three extra sets of tires, or 360 in all were sent with the trucks, which will be used as wanted and replenished as necessary, also a very complete outfit of spare parts. The progress of the experiment will be watched with interest, as this will be service that will try the trucks to the utmost — *Scientific American*.

## ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

## DIGS UP WHISKY

Groundhog hunting will be a favorite sport for some time at New Castle, Pa. Antonio Bellini got a big bag recently. He shot no groundhogs, but he brought home six quarts of whisky. Antonio spied one of the animals, which immediately ducked in its hole. The hunter then proceeded to dig it out, when he came upon the whisky cache. Antonio does not know what became of the groundhog.

## BOLT WRECKS HOUSE

During a severe storm lightning played an odd prank at the home of Leonard Ferrari, of West Hazelton, Pa.

A bolt entered the house, ripped off most of the plastering, smashed nearly all of the windows and brought out soot in such quantities from the chimney that it almost smothered the family, but Ferrari, his wife and six children escaped without a scratch. Their bodies were covered with debris as they were awakened in bed.

## PASTOR HOLDS SALOON AS A DISTINCT NEED

Places must be opened where men may congregate on the

same footing as the saloon, even if public or private money must be contributed toward supporting them, according to the Rev. C. E. Robinson, in a sermon in the Congregational church at Grass Valley, Cal. He said the saloons filled a distinct need for more than 200 years, and that the success of John Barleycorn could be attributed to his being "a good mixer, a maker of friends, who harbored no race prejudices and could not be induced to draw a color line."

## BUZZ-SAW KILLS HIM

Clifton G. Crossman, thirty-five, superintendent of Public Works, was instantly killed at his home on West Hill road. A rapidly revolving twenty-inch buzz-saw struck him in the face, splitting open his head and nearly severing his right arm at the shoulder. His two sons, Harold, fourteen, and Donald, thirteen, witnessed the accident. The latter narrowly escaped. The flying saw passed within ten inches of him.

Donald was passing wood and Harold was throwing sawed blocks in a pile when a stick in Crossman's hand became caught in the saw, wrenching it from the frame work.

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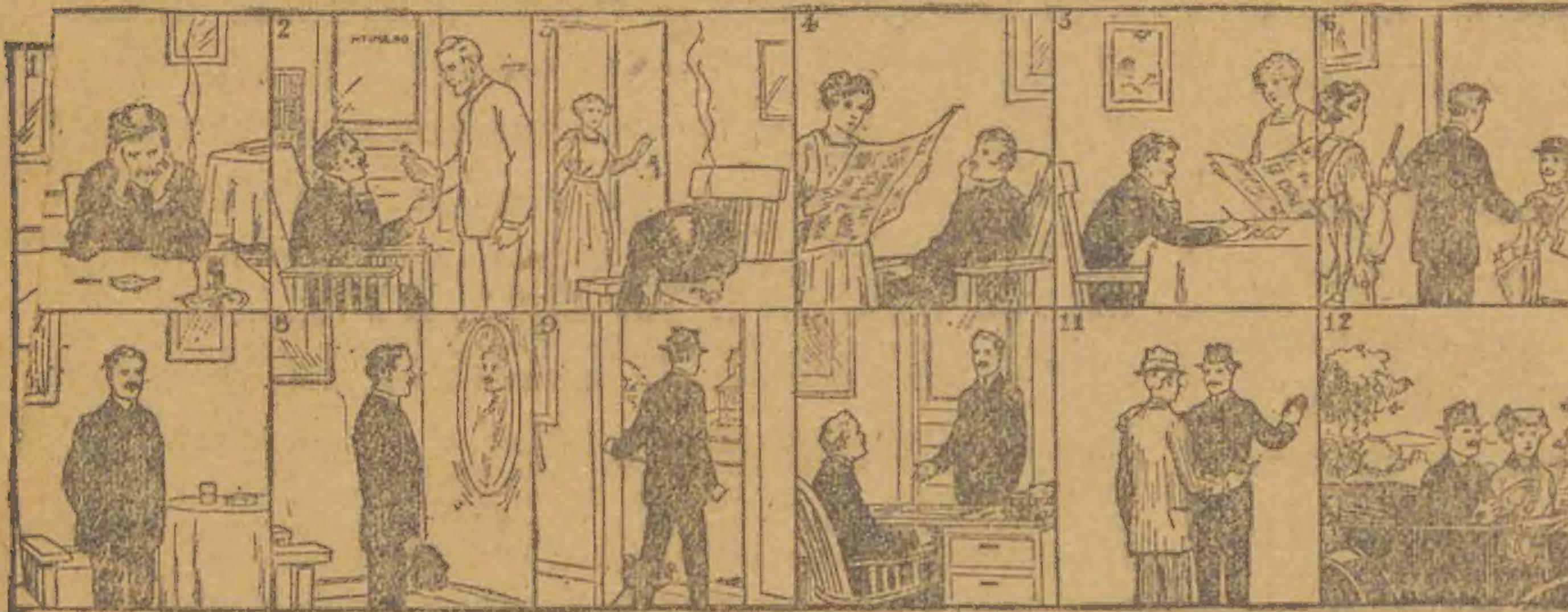
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